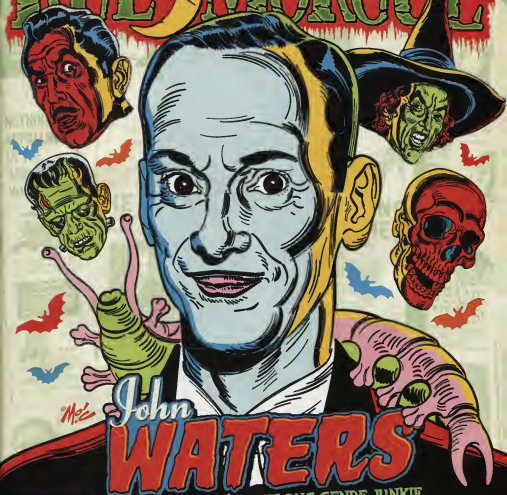


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16 HIS MASTER'S MANIACS

With his new book, *Role Models*, the legendary John Waters dishes on his beloved sickos, psyches, freak shows and more!

Plus! Drag performer and horror filmmaker Peaches Christ picks her top five John Waters movie moments, and more.

by RUSTY NAILS, PEACHES CHRIST and MONICA S. KUEBLER

30 HYMNS FROM THE HOUSE OF HORROR VOLUME II

Last year's free downloadable compilation album was so much fun to stitch together that we decided to try our monstrous hand at it again!

by TREVOR TURNER, DAVE ALEXANDER, TOMAS GRADOWSKI, LISA LABOUCHE and JESSA SOUCEK

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Dezwin & Quarterly's new Melvin Monster collections reveal one of the funnest, finest kids' horror comics of the 1960s.

by PAUL COLLIER

To Vincent Love

Victoria Price helps us celebrate her father's 100th birthday, along with thirteen artists who have created original portraits of the icon.

by GARY PULLIN

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NOTE FROM UNDERGROUND

As I write this I'm suffering through a stomach flu that's all but turned me inside out, and the timing could not be worse for re-watching John Waters' *Pink Flamingos*. Among the stomach-churning sights: a turd in a box, a "singing" asshole, cannibalism, a sexual assault that results in real poultrybirds, furniture licking, graphic incest, genital mutilation and, of course, the topper: Divine, in full drag, eating dog shit. John Waters' 1972 "exercise in bad taste" didn't come by its reputation unfairly.

In our cover story, Waters describes the late drag queen star as his "monster." Of course, while the initial sight of Divine is pretty shocking, once placed into the campy world of a Waters movie, she's not to be feared but rather celebrated for her deviance. The monster is the star, abhorred is played for laughs, the taboo is the norm and there's a little in the way of suspense or tension. *Pink Flamingos* is really more like a reverse horror film in that way.

Yet, given that it has a trailer trash aesthetic, it's centred on a family of criminal outcasts, its stagey characters constantly scream insults at each other, it's chock full of unmotivated cruelty, has all kinds of girish retro set decor and features a character in disturbing makeup, I could just as easily be describing a Rob Zombie flick. The major difference, of course, is that the high camp factor in Waters' film is completely intentional. (Any disingenuous readers reading this willing to finance a John Waters remake of *House of 1000 Corpses*? Please?)

Beyond Zombie and the other mainstream gore filmmakers in the "Splat Pack" who brought bloodshed and torture to the multiplexes, there are even more disturbing shock movies as of late designed to repulse and upset via graphic, often surreal depictions of violence, sex and various mixtures of the two. A Serbian Film, *The Human Centipede*, *Enter the Void*, *Red, White & Blue* and the remake of *I Spat on your Grave* are some of the recent titles to fit that category. It takes a lot of guts to make these kinds of movies (pun not intended); as mentioned in this issue's news section, a programmer in Spain is up on charges for playing a Serbian Film. These movies have a genuine edge.

But there's a key difference between these works and *Pink Flamingos* in that Waters and his acting ensemble of "Dreamlanders" were putting themselves on the line in ways that few, if any, do for cinema these days. The special effects budget was just enough for a few splashes of fake blood, some meat-crusted bones from the butcher (which Divine takes a bite out of to simulate cannibalism), and an old trailer to burn down. The sex acts are real, a chicken is actually killed onscreen (sadly), that ain't no CGI singing asshole and Divine most definitely gives non-simulated head to the actor playing Babe's son Crackers — before eating 100 percent genuine, canine-grade feces.

In the grander scheme of things, it's important to remember that this was nearly 40 years ago, in the relatively serene landscape of Baltimore. Only a few years earlier, in 1968, the Stonewall Riots in New York City's Greenwich Village — in which customers of a gay bar fought back against a brutal police raid — sparked a widespread outcry for gay rights. This was also before The American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of official mental disorders in 1973, and nearly a decade before Wisconsin became the first state to outlaw discrimination on the basis of one's sexual orientation. Divine, whose given name was Hiram Glen McDoss, came from an upper class family and kept his alter ego secret from his parents for a long time before becoming estranged from them in 1971. Here he was, starring in a film, in which his character was vying to become "the filthiest person in the world." Like any good monster, he didn't care if the world was ready for him or not.

Furthermore, Waters shot parts of *Pink Flamingos* guerrilla-style, including one scene in which Divine walks down a busy city street in full transvestite regalia, stopping everyone in their tracks, and another bit with a pre-pubescent doing full-frontal nudity in a public park. That is goddamn edge!

I always felt it was deeply ironic that any man would call a drag queen a "fairy" or something else insinuating a lack of masculinity. It takes a lot of stones to be a 300-pound man willing to don a tight dress and outlandish makeup and strut the downtown at rush hour.

Waters, Divine and the whole *Pink Flamingos* crew were as brave as they come. Monsters who wanted to be monsters, they cast a big neon glow over all us socks, psychos, freak shows and just plain folk looking for a shocking good time at the movies. Thanks for making us sick.



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Welcome Madison Lynn Paterson to the mutant wild world!

COVER JOHN WATERS

Illustration by Mitch O'Connor

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Dave Alex
dave@rue-morcue.com

POST MORTEM

COMMENTS • QUESTIONS • CRITICISM



I JUST GOT MY *Hobo with a Shotgun* issue [RM#110] and I must say, that is one of the finest covers in the magazine's history! Ghoulish Gary has truly outdone himself. And thanks for having Stuart F. Andrews do another interview in the mag. I love his approach and style, and I think he gets wonderful responses to his questions. He is truly my favourite writer you have on staff. I've been meaning to write you for a couple issues now, but after RM#110, it can wait no longer. Your *Notes From Underground* are fucking fantastic. After I recovered from the shock of seeing that picture of the Mighty Men & Monster Maker (a toy I was also obsessed with as a child, yet hadn't thought of in probably twenty years) at the top of your editorial in RM#109, I read your brilliant drawing of parallels between the toy and the current mix-and-match state of the genre and had my mind blown all over again. That was about the most damn insightful thing I've read about the genre in years. This current one about the Old Hag Syndrome was terrifying and utterly fascinating. I do, after all, read this magazine because it educates as well as entertains. You've been on an amazing streak and I can't wait to read each successive entry you bring forth. Dave, you taking over as Editor-in-Chief has not only saved the mag from the dire direction it was previously heading, but has put it on a path to becoming the best it has ever been.

MATT RINSES (A.K.A. SHLOGGS)
— MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

I HAVE SUBSCRIBED TO YOU guys for years now. I just got RM#110 and I am horrified by this issue's *Blood Spattered Guide* and the idiot cutting down death metal. I usually get all of my music from your magazine and that was the worst review I have ever read in my life. That person has no clue what they are talking about. How they got a job at your place, I'll never know. You guys should write a formal apology and fire that person. I love this magazine but I really want to rip this page out of there because it's unbelievably stupid that someone would write something like this.

PAT DANNAKER — PENNSYLVANIA
[via voicemail at the RM House of Horror]

IS IT ANY SURPRISE that the best horror magazine also has the finest four-colour printing? I was actually able to read the Mr. Spock inset box on your small cover reproduction of the *Star Trek* infestation comic. That's quality that jumps off the page.

NEIL TRAVIS — SKOKIE, ILLINOIS

I AM A LONG-TIME *Rue Morgue* reader, eleven years to be exact, and I just wanted to say that before reading your mag I was a virgin aspiring horror fan. Your mag has changed my life. I appreciate horror and love the genre even more, and I owe the mag and its writers for fueling my love for the genre. I occasionally hear bad things from other horror fans about the new *Rue Morgue* and it makes me very angry. No one is ever happy with anything. But I just wanted you to know that I appreciate your mag for the information and quality horror it covers. It was also the creator of this magazine that inspired me to try to make a name for myself in the genre I adore. This summer I commence with an event in Hollywood that I hosted last year and I can't maintain because I am out of money and have no help. It's very hard and I will go on with this event one last time but, god-damn it, no one ever really appreciates shit anymore and I just want to say that I do.

MIKE LOPEZ — ADDRESS WITHHELD

I WOULD LOVE to see *Rue Morgue* do a spotlight on author Robert McCammon. He published most of his work in the '80s, banging out thirteen novels between 1978 and 1992, and then dropped off the radar for a decade. He came back in 2002 with *Speaks the Nightbird*, the first novel in what would become his Matthew Corbett series. He has a new novel hitting bookstores sometime this spring called *The Five*, as well as a short story collection called *The Hunter in the Woods*, coming in late 2011, and another Matthew Corbett book called *The Providence Rider*, out in 2012. McCammon's earlier works were all horror-themed but each book was distinctly unique from anything else he had written, a quality that makes McCammon such a remarkable writer and storyteller. I hope *Rue Morgue* considers doing an article on him. His story contributions to the world of horror are remarkable and sorely overlooked.

HEATHER ALEXANDER — PORTLAND, OREGON

HELLO! MY NAME IS JAY P. FOSGITT. I'm a cartoonist, the creator of the graphic novel *Dead Duck*, and, as my work might suggest, a

NECRONOMICOMICS BY JAY P. FOSGITT



"OH, MY MISTAKE. IT JUST SOUNDED LIKE YOU WERE HAVING A NIGHTMARE!"

fan of horror films. I've recently created a single-panel comic strip, titled "Necronomicomics," which lampoons classic horror films. Hopefully it will appeal to your own comic (and horror) sensibilities.

JAY P. FOSGITT — ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

[See jayfosgitt.com for more. — Ed.]

A FRIEND OF MINE lent me a copy of your publication and I was very impressed with it. You are very thorough in your coverage of the horror genre. From films *Stake Land* and *Daybreakers*, to music (The Gratesquary and Fever Ray), to books (*Grande Dame Guignol Cinema* and *Eerie Von's* book of early Merfitts photography), I have to hand it to you, you have it all. P.S. I think the honesty in your reviews is the best aspect of your magazine.

FERMAN SIMS — ADDRESS WITHHELD

WE ENCOURAGE READERS TO SEND THEIR COMMENTS VIA MAIL. • ON EMAIL, LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR LENGTH AND/OR CONTENT. PLEASE SEND TO info@rue-morgue.com OR

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Bloodlines



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS & HORROR HAPPENINGS

NEW DISTRIBUTORS TO BRING MORE INTERNATIONAL HORROR TO NORTH AMERICA

Not long after filmmaker Kevin Smith got the media's attention in January by announcing his plan to self-distribute his new horror movie *Red State*, a number of other companies announced plans to bring more otherwise obscure genre titles to the mainstream horror market.

In March, horror website Bloody Disgusting (bloody-disgusting.com) announced its partnership with AMC Theatres and movie management/production company The Collective (a co-owner of the site) to distribute movies under its own label in the US theatrically, through video on demand, and on DVD. Bloody-Disgusting.com will choose the movies, and Salient Media, a partner of The Collective, will handle distribution through a pre-existing agreement with Vivendi Universal.

The first release under this arrangement is *Rammbock*, a German zombie movie by Marvin Kren, that will hit AMC theatres in May. The theatrical releases will be called "Bloody Disgusting Night Terrors," while the VOD/DVD titles will carry the "Bloody Disgusting Selects" name.

"We will support the series by playing trailers and posting one-sheets and standees in the theatres where the films will be released," says Nikkole Denson-Randolph, vice-president of specialty and alternative content for AMC Theatres, the second-largest theatre chain in the US with more than 5300 screens. "Over the past five years, we have had a strong history of horror/thriller performances. We have supported other film series such as *After Dark* HorrorFest and created events like *SawFest* — midnight showings of the previous movies leading up to the latest in the *Saw* series —



Rammbock: The first theatrical release under the Bloody Disgusting Night Terrors banner.

but I don't believe we have committed to a year-long, exclusive relationship or this level of marketing support in the past."

Says Brad Miska, president and Editor-in-Chief of Bloody Disgusting, "We could easily, and I stress the word 'easily,' acquire a bunch of garbage for pennies, slap our name on it and dump it on DVD like so many others. But we've built our name on honesty and integrity with our readership, and will only release films we genuinely, honestly love."

Miska's favourite acquisition so far is *Cold Fish*, the latest from Japan's Shin Sano (*Suicide Club*). The goal is to release one movie each month, though some will probably go straight to VOD/DVD. Those that do hit AMC theatres will play every Wednesday and Friday. "The plan is to make an event out of the release, and we'll be showing shorts in front of each film," he says.

Also in March, the UK's FrightFest film festival and distributor Wild Bunch announced they were

branching out into theatrical distribution there with FrightFest Features. Starting it off is *Shadow*, an English-language movie by Italian musician Federico Zampaglione, about an Iraq war vet who discovers Nazi horrors in the Alps. (FC picked up the US rights late last year.) It hit UK theatres April 29, with a May 23 DVD/Buy-Release. The two companies will choose titles together, with FrightFest Features handling bookings and promotions of the films, and Wild Bunch tackling the retail side through a pre-existing agreement with Entertainment One in New York, says FrightFest co-director Greg Day.

"The competition is fierce," he points out, "but demand is still healthy, so it makes sense that more labels will emerge, particularly to exploit niche markets like horror. Viral expertise and a real understanding of your audience is important — hence, brands like us and Bloody Disgusting getting involved."

Underhill Films, another DVD/VOD genre label announced in March, will see the National Entertainment Collectibles Association (NECA) and Wreckin' Hill Entertainment distribute four or five titles a year in North America. The first year will include *Locked In*, a thriller starring Eliza Dushku, and *Riding of the Cries*, a fantasy horror film featuring Brad Dourst.

"I think that there is a need for quality genre films in the market, and [video on demand] is becoming a pretty strong platform," Miska says. "I think companies are building up libraries for the day everyone has an iPad or similar device. Personally, I just want to release movies I like. What's cooler than having your name attached to something badass?"

A.S. BERMAN



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EVIL DEAD

STEVE NILES LAUNCHES INDIE IMPRINT BLOODY PULP BOOKS

Back in 2002, Steve Niles practically single-handedly rejuvenated the horror comics scene with his Alaska-set vampire saga tale *30 Days of Night*, launching a career which has seen him create new series for both Dark Horse (*Criminal Madsacre*) and IDW (*Edge of Doom* and *The Mystery Society*). Now, he's returning to his DIY roots for his latest endeavour, Bloody Pulp Books. A tag-team enterprise with graphic artist Alex Lodermeier, the new art-house publishing company came to be for one simple reason.

"When you go to a comic or horror convention, artists always have sketchbooks, new books or, you know, personal items that they can sell," explains Niles. "I never had that. I gotta call Dark Horse or IDW to try to get books and go through this whole process. All I wanted to do was a 'writer's sketchbook,' collections of some of my short prose and maybe some of my scripts, if people want to read that crap."

Bloody Pulp Books' first release, *Cal McDonald Detective Tales*, debuted last month. It is a 94-page two-story collection featuring the star of Niles' *Criminal Madsacre* series. ("It's very hard to find places for short prose these days," he notes.) Following this, the company will release *Not Bad for a Human: The Life and Films of Lance Henniksen* (out May 5, see p.53 for review), co-written by Henniksen and Joe Maddrey.

"Joe introduced me to Lance, and Lance just said, 'I wrote this biography and publishers aren't interested,' because it talks about his work and not who he slept with," says Niles. "I was like, 'Well, that sounds like a great book to me!' ... [Since] it's really expensive to get the clearance rights on all those photographs from his films, I called ten of my favourite artists and every single one of them said, 'Yeah, I'll do it' and they didn't even want to get paid."

Eric Powell, Mike Mignola and Bill Sienkiewicz are among the artists who contributed an illustration highlighting a specific film in Henniksen's career.

"The best part was every one of them had a movie in mind, which was great, because I thought 'Okay, everybody's gonna want to do Bishop [Henniksen's android character from *Alens*],' " says Niles.

It's no surprise that Niles has returned to independent publishing. From his early days with Eclipse Press to his recent vocal support of indie presses in general, he's been very outspoken on the subject, particularly on his blog (steveniles.com), and through his involvement with Creators Front for Diversity in Comics, a grassroots movement that supports creator-owned projects and promotes variety in the comics industry.

"I'm just trying to cheerlead," he says. "Comics have been dipping in sales for, say, twenty years now. We're facing unbelievably low numbers and creator-owned books are getting tougher and tougher to do,



Tim Bradstreet's rendering of Lance Henniksen as vampire Jesse Hooker in *Near Dark*, for Bloody Pulp Books' *Not Bad for a Human: The Life and Films of Lance Henniksen*

because the comic companies are forced to go with licensed properties... [that] they know they can sell. One of the things I'm really encouraging is that we might have to do it ourselves for a while."

That doesn't mean Niles is giving up working for established comic book companies, however. He is also currently developing a graphic adaptation of the critically acclaimed Edgar Allan Poe play *Nevermore*, along with its creators Stuart Gordon and Jeffrey Combs, for IDW.

"The way I want to do it is have one artist do the 'performance,' and as he reads a story or poem or play, it sort of fades into another artist," he says of the concept, which he's taking his time on. "There are so many Poe comics out there, we just want to make sure that it stands out, because the play is so good. We want to do it justice."

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ROADKILL



whatlurksbeyond.com

What Lurks Beyond claims to be "the internet's first anthology horror web series," offering a new tale of terror with each five to ten minute installment. Boasting good production values, the first two episodes concern a murderous husband whose wife won't stay dead, and a woman gifted with a creepy aura that proves to be much more than a simple closet.

fountainpop.com

While his site is not solely devoted to horror, Fountain Pop founder Bill Howard regularly wades into our beloved, bloody waters. Come for his frequent DVD and Blu-ray reviews (complete with technical dissections), and stay for the bonus articles and celebrity photo gallery.

horror-spot.com

Horror cinephiles are an obsessive bunch and Horror-Spot.com seeks to channel all that feverish fan energy into a website for sick cinema aficionados. Sign up, create lists of your favorite films and write reviews to help build the community—and watch movie trailers while doing so!

zombieslam.com

If zombies are your go-to monster for every apocalypse, owing by this site for a wide range of fresh-eater book and DVD reviews and video clips, as well as the occasional junk food recipe and appearance by a guest monster (namely vampires).

brookewalkhart.com/cannibal_god

If you prefer your flesh-eaters to actually be alive, read Brooks Walkhart's serial novel about Scotland's infamous Sweeney Borne cannibal clan. New chapters are posted roughly once a week, and Walkhart's prose is both literate and poetic, making it somewhat reminiscent of the ghostly yarns of yesteryear. Bits in!

Compiled by MONICA S. KUENLER

Get a Roadkill suggestion? Email a link to: roadkill@free-press.com

CAMPAIGN AIMS TO BRING CLASSIC HORROR BACK TO BRITISH TV

There was a time when classic horror movies were television staples, but those days are long gone. Richard Gladman hopes to change that with the Classic Horror Campaign, a movement whose lofty goal is to persuade the BBC and other networks to once again broadcast vintage horror films.

"It seems that the more channels we have, the less choice we have," Gladman says. "As a horror movie fan I realized that the only movies of this genre being screened [on television] were pretty poor mainstream Hollywood hits of the last decade or so. Where were all the classics, the black and white Universal movies, the iconic British Hammer and Amicus films and the quirky cult hits of the '70s?"

Gladman and a handful of celebrity sponsors, including Hammer veteran Caroline Munro and horror actress Emily Booth, started the campaign in earnest by resubmitting one of the BBC's own classic gimmicks: the horror double bill. On Friday, April 22, the group teamed up with London's Ravey Bar & Screen to present a double feature of Jacques Tourneur's 1957 classic *Night of the Demon* and Hammer's 1972 cult favorite *Wampyr* *Circus*.

Other celebrity supporters include screenwriters Jeremy Dyson and Reese Shearsmith, actor/producer Andy Nyman, actress Eileen Daly, best-selling author David Moody and Hammer regular Shane Briant. While there were no additional screenings scheduled as of this writing, Gladman says his campaign has received a warm welcome so far. In fact, there's already been talk of making the screenings a regular event and possibly holding similar screenings outside of London. (In the meantime, he urges others to visit classichorrorcampaign.com to join the cause.)

"We certainly seem to have tapped into some kind of zeitgeist; a need for nostalgia and a fear of losing part of our cultural history," Gladman enthuses. "How can younger film fans truly appreciate the modern horror genre without an understanding of the genre's history?"

APRIL SNELLINGS

ENTRAILS

English actor Michael Gough died March 11 at the age of 94 after battling an undisclosed illness. Though the mainstream media reported that he was best known for playing Alfred in the Batman movies of the '80s and '90s, Gough also enjoyed a healthy run in horror films, including Hammer's *Horror of Dracula* (1958) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1962), and Amicus' *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors* (1965) and *The Skull* (1965), and *Trog* (1970).

Angel Sala, director of the Sitges Film Festival, was recently slapped with child pornography charges by Barcelona's Office of the Public Prosecutor for screening *A Serbian Film* at the 2010 festival. Similarly, Melbourne Underground Film Festival founder Richard Wolsztownski was reportedly ordered to pay \$750 to the Royal Children's Hospital by Melbourne Magistrates' Court, as a penalty for showing Bruce LaBruce's gay zombie epic *L.A. Zombie* at last August's MUFF (RMF/108). He originally faced a maximum two years imprisonment or a \$28,068 fine.

Spanish filmmakers Sadra Gonzalez and Sonia Escobedo claim to have made their feature *The Vampire in the Hole* for all of \$1. Using on-hand equipment, guerrilla filmmaking techniques and unpaid actors, the film appears to be much more accomplished than its meager budget could ever suggest, at least judging by the trailer at thevampireinthehole.com. The plot follows the plight of a seventeen-year-old girl who must deal with being a vampire in a world where the creatures are barely tolerated by their neighbors.

In August, Zombie Burger + Drink Lab (300 E. Grand Avenue) is slated to open in Des Moines, Iowa. Featuring horror-inspired cuisine such as "bashed" (rather than "smashed") burgers, the place is even owned by a once-aspiring horror movie makeup artist-turned-chef named George Forman. But if you crave horror hush with a more classic bent, Sara Karloff and Bela Lugosi Jr. are reportedly piloting the concept of a combination horror-themed restaurant and wax museum to casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey. No word yet on when the dead meat will hit the grill.

Cannibal Holocaust director Ruggero Deodato is making a sequel to his 1980 home invasion film *House on the Edge of the Park*. According to North Bank Entertainment, Giovanni Lombardo Radice will reprise his role as Ricky in a sequel written by Andrew Jones (Tasmanian Wasteland) and produced by Ian Gray. Currently absent from the project is the original's head nutzer, David Hess. Fortunately, as he is starring in Jones and Gray's *Maxson Rising*, there's a good chance we could still see Hess return to *House*.

The Juriji mo manga Gyo will receive an anime adaptation from Japanese animation studio Ufotable, with Takayuki Hirao (*Parasite Agent*) directing. The story, which begins with mankind being menaced by rotting marine life that rises out of the sea on mechanical legs, spirals into the insane, uncharted territories typical of Ito's work in such manga as *Uzumaki* and the *Rune* series.

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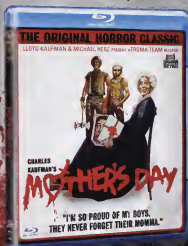
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CORONER'S REPORT

WEIRD STATS & MORBID FACTS

CASE NO.

111

This past January, in advance of the Zimbabwe election, researchers determined that nearly one third of the country's registered voters were deceased.

Nesferatu director F.W. Murnau did not get to see the premiere of his final film, *Tabu: A Story of the South Seas*; he was killed in an automobile accident in California in 1931 at the age of 42.

Archaeologists working a dig in Somerset, England, have uncovered human skulls, which they determined were used as drinking cups some 14,000 years ago.

During the casting of *The X-Files*, network executives at Fox were very much against giving the role of Scully to Gillian Anderson. Even during the filming of the show's pilot they continued to worry that they should have cast someone "sexier."

On July 25 of last year, two neighbors in Manchester, England, got into a violent physical dispute that left one of them dead. Police have determined that the altercation began after a text message was auto-corrected to read as an insult.

Following Oscar Wilde's death from cerebral meningitis in 1900, there was an attempt made by a writer at *Critic* magazine to convince the populace that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* author was not actually dead, but had in fact transcended death.

A German superstition states that any child who feeds from his or her mother's bosom after being weaned off breast milk is at risk of becoming a vampire.

Actor Massimo Troisi postponed heart surgery so he could complete filming on 1990's *The Postman*; however, the decision proved fatal when the 41-year-old died of a heart attack mere hours after the shoot wrapped. He was later nominated for a posthumous Best Actor Oscar for the role.

Legislation is currently being considered in Florida that would allow the Daytona International Speedway to build a columbarium (a.k.a. a mausoleum for human cremains) on site for anyone who wants to rest there.

Actress Alyson Hannigan had no less than ten auditions for her role as Willow on TV's *Buttly the Vampire Slayer*, and got the part despite flubbing her final audition, during which she couldn't properly pronounce the technical terms her character rhymed off in the script.

Mark Musarella, a New York City paramedic, recently pled guilty to taking pictures of a murder victim while on duty and then posting the images of the woman's corpse on Facebook.

According to C. Bernard Ruffin's *Last Words: the final deathbed words: War of the Worlds* author H.G. Wells spoke to his son were: "I just don't understand you."

When Colombian police opened the gates to allow sports fans to exit the stadium near the end of a soccer game on March 27, more than 200 people rushed inside instead, carrying a coffin with them. The 17-year-old boy inside it had been shot in a drive-by and it was his final wish to attend the game.

Compiled by MONICA S. KUEBLER

Got a weird stat or morbid fact? Send it through to info@rue-morgue.com

THE RUE MORGUE SICK TOP SIX



VINCENT PRICE'S BEST VILLAINY

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2. **THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES**
LOCUSTS NOSH ON NURSE ALLEN
3. **THEATRE OF BLOOD**
LIONHEART OISHES UP DOGS
4. **HOUSE OF WAX**
JARROD DIPS HIS DETRACTORS
5. **DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN**
SANDBLASTER + SKIN = SKELETON
6. **DIARY OF A MADMAN**
CORDIER OCCAPITATES HIS MUSE



JAMES FISHER zinecircum.com

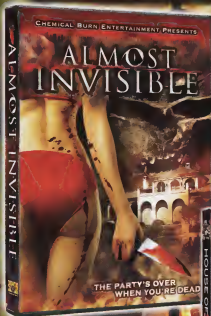
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1



2



3



4



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HIS MASTER'S MANIACS

by
Rusty Nails

FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER MADE A FLAT-OUT "HORROR" FILM, JOHN WATERS IS ONE OF THE MOST BELOVED DIRECTORS IN THE HORROR COMMUNITY. MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE HIS MOST MEMORABLE CHARACTERS TEND TO BE MANIACS BIRTHED FROM THE DEPTHS OF SOME GENRE SIDESHOW, AND HE'S RARELY FOUND A LINE HE WASN'T WILLING TO CROSS.

From the bizarre beginnings of his early shorts, including *Eat Your Makeup* (1968), in which a crazed nanny forces girls to "model themselves to death," to his last, sorely underappreciated feature, *A Dirty Shame* (2004), about a gang of loony sex addicts, Waters has proven himself the master of cinematic revolution and revolution.

Theatrical cruelty, madness and general degenerate behaviour form the worlds that these characters live in. For example, 1970's *Multiple Maniacs*, starring Divine (a big, bushy, sandy-voiced transvestite with killer lips), is a tribute to Herschell Gordon Lewis'



Wounded Warriors turns women's cinema. In *Seed of Chucky*, Leese is shot at his childhood home, as is (below) Kathleen Turner puts another notch on her apron in *Serial Mom*.



fore, which is good for any anal problems. Maybe it could be little assholes. [Laughs] That would be nice.

Have you ever thought of making a Pull-on horror movie?

No, I haven't, because you have to really know the genre well. I know the genre, but it's already been satirized so much that I don't know how you could make a horror film seem fresh by satirizing it. I think the next way to do it is to come up with something that really frightens people again. I'm much more in the spirit of comedy and I think that comedy has already gone pretty far in horror movies. In the old days, the [horror films] were so bad they were funny. And then there were the ones that were made to be funny. I still go see every *Friday the 13th* [movie]. I go to see all the new kids that are in them. And immediately if you fuck, you get killed. It's so old fashioned, the morals in these movies, in a way. I would think it would be good if one of the monsters fucked one of the kids. That's what I'm waiting for. That would be new.

Some people say *Serial Mom* is more of a horror movie. What was the experience of making that film like for you?

I think it's one of my best movies. I think it was the first really Hollywood movie I made that actually worked. Kathleen [Turner] is great in it. The experience of it was hard, but that's the only one where we almost had enough money to make it.

It has several references to Herschell Gordon Lewis in it—you've always championed Lewis' work. What was it like to have a role in *Blood Feast 2: All U Can Eat*?

We were [shooting] somewhere an hour's drive from New Orleans. I got there at, like, two in the morning, and I looked in this shed and there was Herschell with people covered in blood. He was bitching because they

were going to do two takes [instead of one], which really made me laugh. It was great just to see him directing. The part with me and the kid I just kind of made up, which he said was fine to do. I was playing a pedophile priest.

Did you see *Multiple Maniacs* as a tribute to Lewis' hillbilly classic *Two Thousand Maniacs*?

Well, *Multiple Maniacs* was *Two Thousand Maniacs* even though the plot has nothing to do with it. The title was an homage. *Blood Feast*, the ripping out of the tongue—all that stuff led to *Multiple Maniacs*. It was similar, certainly similar. I think even eating shit in *Pink Flamingos* weirdly came from Herschell because he was always the one that said he made movies that Hollywood wouldn't or couldn't make. So, I did the one thing that exploitation wouldn't or couldn't do.

What was it like to work with Chucky in *Seed of Chucky*?

When we made *Chucky*, all the people that were working the puppets were under the floor. It was filmed entirely on location. My strongest memory of it is the first take that I filmed with Chucky. Chucky knocks me down and they say "cut." When you're shooting, Chucky actually moves and talks—it's not like they put that in later. So they say "cut" and I look up and Chucky says, "Fuck you, John," which really made me shit because the puppeteers were working down below you. It made me laugh because you think that when they say "cut" that Chucky's not going to talk anymore. I'm really a big, huge fan of



DRAG PERFORMER AND HORROR FILMMAKER
**PEACHES CHRIST PICKS HER TOP FIVE FAVOURITE
 HORROR MOMENTS IN THE FILMS OF JOHN WATERS.**

Without You, I'M NOTHING

★★★★★ *By Peaches Christ, who knows. I mean it.* ★★★★★

I GREW UP IN THE CHABBY STATE OF MARYLAND, ATTENDING CATHOLIC SCHOOL, WHILE NURTURING A DEEP LOVE OF MONSTERS, MURDER AND MAYHEM, OBSESSED WITH PSYCHO AT AN INAPPROPRIATELY YOUNG AGE (SIX), WHILE OTHER CHILDREN PLAYED OUTDOORS ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS, I SAT HOME IN THE DARK WATCHING ELYRIA'S MOVIE MACABRE MY HORROR MOVIE OBSESSIONS BECAME MY PERSONAL RELIGION.

I grew up in Maryland, like nobody understood me and that I was surviving childhood in a real-life village of the damned. This changed in the sixth grade when the local press wrote about a movie being filmed in Baltimore called *Hairspray*. They described one of the stars as a man named Divine playing a mother in this upcoming movie by local filmmaker John Waters. I couldn't fathom something this strange and exciting happening in boring old Maryland, and my newest obsession was born.

I call it the "John Waters Immersion Period," when one of us children of the popcorn first discovers John's cast and crew of regulars, affectionately known as the Dreamlanders, and devours the early works. Divine, Mink Stole and Edith Massey became my own version of the Holy Trinity and I memorized, rehearsed and recited John's brilliant dialogue for friends and family as though it came straight from the Bible. By age twelve, I exclusively worshipped at the altar of John Waters, his book *Shock Value* my first practical film school text.

It's where I learned to seek out the works of my other monumental influences such as William Castle, Herschell Gordon Lewis and Russ Meyer.

Years later, I've been fortunate enough to work with my idols through my Midnight Mass movie events in San Francisco, and recently I even wrote and directed my first feature film, *All About Evil* (as alter-ego Joshua Grannell), co-starring Mink Stole. John came to the set one day for lunch and I felt as if the Pope had arrived to bless the production. It was a bit surreal – deep down inside I'll always truly believe I'm his biggest fan. Honestly, without John Waters and Divine there wouldn't be a Peaches Christ.

Being a lover of all things horrific, I've enjoyed countless legendary moments of horror, repulsion and violence courtesy of Waters, which is why I was asked to pick my top five scenes in his films. (Note: they're best enjoyed with repeated viewings, preferably with hundreds of screaming, like-minded freaks.)

1

MURDER BY HAM

Serial Mom features some incredible murder sequences but nothing tops Beverly (Kathleen Turner) relentlessly beating a woman to death with a ham, even though a knife is readily available. The scene is all the more delicious because the victim is a fan of the movie *Annie* and has just forced her dog to lick her feet while she sings the wretched show tune "Tomorrow."

2

LESBIAN PENIS AMPUTATION

In the epic lesbian fairy tale *Desperate Living*, butt-dagger Mole decides to transition genders and get a penis. When "his" lesbian, dick-hating girlfriend Muffy disapproves, they decide to remedy this problem by cutting it off in a completely horrifying way, celebrating tremendous disrespect for one of my most favourite body parts.



3

DIVINE FUCKS HERSELF

In *Female Trouble*, runaway Dawn Deaverport gets picked up while hitchhiking by Earl Peterson, who drives to a junkyard and fucks her on a dirty mattress. More disturbing than Earl's heavily shit-stained underwear is the realization

that both Earl and Dawn are played by Divine, which creates a feeling of discomfort coupled with arousal that should horrify any right-minded viewer. At least it did for me.



4

MOTHER / SON ORAL SEX BLESSING

Pink Flamingos is the mother of all gross-out movies, rife with taboo horror acts such as dog-shit eating, chicken fucking and asshole singing. There's just nothing right about Divine and her son Crackers cursing their rivals by licking their furniture, or Divine giving her son a blow job while he performs. I always know you'd be the best, Momma!



5

GIANT LOBSTER RAPE

Perhaps my favourite classic horror moment of any John Waters film is, when for no reason whatsoever, Divine gets raped by a giant lobster during the finale of *Multiple Maniacs*. She even knows the lobster's name, Lobotora, and screams it out while the huge crustacean relentlessly violates her. It's horrific, upsetting, disturbing and mind-boggling – a truly perfect film ending.

ICKY Influences

ROLE MODELS

John W. Warner
FSG AG 33

Even punnerts and non-conformists need role models. And just as John Waters is now one to emulate (he's the world over, he too was [and still is] inspired by the unsightly and unconventional), *Role Models* is a candid misadventure with the (monthly) delightful deviants Waters himself looks up to.

Early on obsessive as none of his fans, Waters has managed to track down many of his own horses — some you might expect (controversial playwright Tennessee Williams), but others will likely surprise you (popular '60s crooner Johnny Mathis and Margaret "Wicked Witch of the West" Hamilton). For the most part, Waters finds his faves on the fringes: among them, strippers, amateur po-



something he aspired to from childhood.

Horror comes up frequently in the first half of *Hole Me*, despite being almost absent from the latter (which deals more with Waters' favourite visual artists and his tastes in pornography). We learn about his obsession with *The Bad Seed* and his love of Bobby "Boris" Pickett's "The Monster Mash," and why being a one-hit wonder might not be so bad.

Waters' writing is like a conversation itself — often leaping from one idea to another — and takes some getting used to, but it's definitely worth it. Even when he's not writing about the genre, there is plenty of real-life horror on display (from neglectful mothers to a washed-up pornographer who lives with two pigs, a small pack of dogs and 500 rats), suddenly making his movies seem somewhat less extreme. Waters takes you to places you're likely too scared to visit and introduces you to those bad influences your mother warned you about, while still basking in politics, homosexuality in Hollywood, and his hopes for his own death and legacy. There are occasional contradictions, the cover's a mile repellent and we'll forgive you if you skip a section or two (not everyone is into Miley pine), but regardless of whether you're a Waters fan or a devotee of the weird, there are deli ci-ous, dirty little secrets waiting between these covers for you.

MONICA S. KIMBLE



Catching A Buzz *Wine, Beer, and Spirits* by David A. Thomas, Jr. The Fox

that movie — of all those movies. I am still. Whenever I take the subway in Manhattan, almost one hundred percent of the time I'm recognized for either that movie or *Love You to Death* on Court TV [Waters played a character called "The Groom Reaper" on the wedding-themed murder stories show]. They have no idea about the other stuff I do. They know me because I'm in the *Crucky* movie.

If you could be a monster from any movie, who would you be?

I would be Tony Perkins in *Psycho*! But if I had to be a real monster, maybe *The Fly*. *The Fly* (1958) was a big one when I was a kid. When they put his head in the printing machine, that made me really crazy. I loved it so much!

What is it about *Psycho* that's fascinating to you?

For its time it was so radical. The heroine gets killed in the first third. Tony Perkins doing the transvestite thing was almost [unheard of] at that point. Of course the shower scene and the nudity in it, too. I think Tony Perkins really made the film. I was a big fan of Tony Perkins. His son is [folk singer] Elvis Perkins. He's opened for me at my *This Filthy World Goes to Hollywood* [spoken word tour] at UCLA. The funniest thing is that I've met Elvis before and I'm a big fan of his music, but this year at the Provincetown Film Festival at the Wellfleet drive-in they showed *Psycho*. I was to introduce the movie and Elvis was there, alone in his car, watching his dad.

What draws you to horror films?

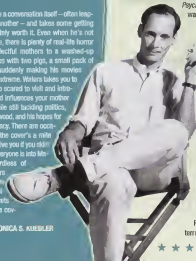
The same reason you get on an amusement park ride. And it is odd. A lot of people pay money to be frightened when you certainly don't want to be frightened in real life. It's because you can control when you want to be frightened and I guess you have to pay for that because, when you're frightened and you don't wanna be, it's the opposite of entertainment. It's fun to be scared. It's fun to be startled and it's so hard to do [now] that I'm always looking for any director that can think of a new way to scare people because it's been done so many times. It's the one genre that works everywhere in the world. It's the easiest to translate. The easiest for subtitles. It's the easiest for any country in the world because being scared is the same. Being funny isn't.

Are there any things that are turn-offs for you in horror films?

Bad acting. It helps if people can act in horror films. They have to be good actors. Or nude. Preferably both.

What would you say scares you in everyday life?

Romantic comedies. I am terrified if Jennifer Aniston is in it. I'm just terrified! 😬



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VICTORIA PRICE HELPS US CELEBRATE HER FATHER'S
100th BIRTHDAY, ALONG WITH THIRTEEN HORROR ARTISTS
WHO HAVE CREATED ORIGINAL PORTRAITS OF THE ICON.

To Vincent with Love

by GARY PULLIN



THIS MONTH MARKS THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF HORROR'S GREATEST ICON, VINCENT PRICE (MAY 27, 1911 – OCTOBER 25, 1993). A true renaissance man, his passion for acting was matched only by his undying love of cuisine (he even published a number of cookbooks with his wife, Mary) and visual arts.

Not surprisingly, the beloved actor was an avid art collector and gained great pleasure from sharing his collection with others. From 1962 to 1971, he partnered with Sears Roebuck to curate the Vincent Price Collection of Fine Art, for which he hand-picked affordable prints from such renowned painters as Rembrandt, Pablo Picasso and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec to be sold in stores across America, thus realizing his dream of bringing art to the masses.

"My father was the most passionate person I've ever met and his greatest passion was the visual arts," says Price's daughter, Victoria. "He never felt art should be this highbrow thing. He never felt [art] should be this elite or scary idea. It should be something that enriched anyone's life through whatever way they were turned on by it."

Victoria, an accomplished artist who runs a design firm in Santa Fe, is also the author of *Vincent Price: A Daughter's Biography* (St. Martin's Press, 1999), and recently launched vincentpricelegacy.com to celebrate her dad's accomplished and lasting career. She'll be attending events all over the country this month, including the Vincent Price Art Museum at the East Los Angeles Community Center. Once a small space housing roughly 90 pieces from Vincent's personal collection, the museum is now a four-story building with a lecture hall, a collections vault and seven distinct, interactive galleries.

Vincent was careful to foster Victoria's own love of art by taking her to exhibits as a child. She says that his philosophy was simple but deep.

"At the end of his life somebody gave him a pin by an artist that said 'Art Saves Lives' and I think he absolutely believed that," she explains. "He didn't think that was hyperbolic in any way. I think, for him, when he walked into a museum or met an artist and [saw] their work, and it resonated for him, it really gave him faith in mankind. In the face of living through the 20th century, the first and second World Wars, Vietnam, the threat of nuclear holocaust and whatever else – what some people get from church, religion and spirituality, my dad got from art."

She adds that his devotion had an effect on his professional life and the types of characters that he often portrayed.

"I think some of his best roles, where he and his fans connected the most, were the ones where he played somebody who was hurt, slighted and misunderstood by society. In a way, that person is the artist. I realized a few years ago, for someone who was born in 1911 in the Midwest to have this passion for visual arts made him an iconic classical weirdo, but also gave him a sense of purpose to his life. That connection in his roles to that kind of character really came through to people."

This issue, we're proud to wish Vincent a happy 100th birthday with our own ghostly gallery, featuring original portraits by thirteen contemporary horror artists who have all been inspired by the many macabre moments Vincent Price has gifted us with throughout his illustrious film career. We asked them to pick a favourite Price character and render him however they saw fit, and then tell us a little something about their choices.

Of course, we also couldn't resist asking Victoria what her father might have thought of such a tribute.

"Towards the end of his life he would do his own little caricature on his signatures," she recalls. "He would have got a kick out of this for two reasons: it's very flattering and it's also someone reflecting back to him their own passion for art. He would have got a big kick out of that."

1. HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL BY JASON EDMISTON JASONEDMISTON.COM

"Vincent's performance in *House on Haunted Hill* is uncharacteristically reserved, but still oozes quiet menace. I wanted my tribute to this creepy film to be surreal and unexpected, peppered with a little sly humour, much like the film itself."



2. PRINCE OF HORROR

BY D.W. FRYDENDALL DFRYDENDALL.NET

"I remember, as a kid in the '70s, seeing Vincent Price on all of the cool TV shows. I remember he'd be on *Night Gallery*, *The Brady Bunch*, even *The Muppet Show*. From that, I got into watching his films and it was all over by then, I was hooked. Later on in life, I learned he was a huge art collector and supporter of the arts. I really respect the man."

3. WITCHFINDER

BY MIKE MIGNOLA ARTOFMIKEMIGNOLA.COM

"*Witchfinder General* is an odd, brutal little film. Price sports a pretty unfortunate beard, but he has a very cool hat."

4. THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES

BY BOB TYRRELL ROBTYRRELL.COM

"I've been a Vincent Price fan as long as I can remember, and *Dr. Phibes* was always one of my favorite Price characters."



TO HAVE THIS PASSION FOR VISUAL ARTS MADE HIM AN

ICONIC CLASSICAL WEIRDO

BUT ALSO GAVE HIM A SENSE OF PURPOSE TO HIS LIFE



Victoria Price

5. THEATRE OF BLOOD

BY DANIEL HORNE DANIELHORNESTUDIOS.COM

"I chose Theatre of Blood because he is a mad man and played so many characters. He is a classic horror icon and I honour him with my art."

6. VINCENT PRICE COLLAGE

BY CHRIS ROBERTS MONSTERBATORYWORLD@ETSY.COM

"I couldn't choose one single image so I did a primary portrait with secondary portraits of some of my favourite Price performances."

7. VINCENT'S PRICE

BY VINCENT MARCONE MYPETSKELTON.COM

"My version of Mister Price... reincarnated."



- Anatomia del Film Monstrous -



8. ANATOMIA DEL FILM MONSTROUS

BY JAMES FISHER ZIRCOZINCUS.COM

"This direction depicts what makes a man a legend: his work, and his heart."

9. THE BAT

BY JUSTIN ERICKSON PHANTOMCITYCREATIVE.COM

"The Bat may not be Vincent Price's best film, but any movie where he plays a sinister doctor is hard to resist. It's exciting to watch Price shift from kind and helpful to greedy and murderous, the campy dialogue is a blast and then there's The Bat himself, a faceless, razor-clawed villain sporting a fedora. What's not to love?"

10. VINCENT PRICE

BY MICHAEL MARABIAN MICHAELMARABIAN.COM

"The one thing that made Vincent Price so deliciously fun to watch was the elegance he brought to every role. Whether he played the victim, villain, vigilante, best friend, hero or anti-hero, it was his sophisticated demeanour that made him stand out among all others."



RUE MORGUE RADIO
PRESENTS

HYMNS FROM THE HOUSE OF HORROR

VOLUME II

BY TREVOR TUMINSKI, DAVE ALEXANDER, TOMB DRAGOWIR, LISA LADOUCEUR AND JESSA SOBCHUK

LAST YEAR'S FREE, DOWNLOADABLE COMPILATION ALBUM RUE MORGUE RADIO PRESENTS...HYMNS FROM THE HOUSE OF HORROR WAS SO MUCH FUN TO STITCH TOGETHER THAT WE DECIDED TO TRY OUR MONSTROUS HAND AT IT AGAIN! Over the past year, a number of bands have caught our attention, so we asked some of 'em to lend us a song that we could pass along in the hopes that their macabre melodies will incite the same kind of incurable madness in you as they have in us. We received exclusive tracks, previously unreleased oddities, sneak peeks and killer cuts that, once mashed together with some fake grindhouse trailers (courtesy of RM staff and friends), makes for one hell of a horror set. Read on for the lowdown on each band, then click over to rue-morgue.com to download your copy, complete with printable artwork, and hosted by Rue Morgue Radio's eerie emcee, Tomb Dragowir.

DON'T DRAG YOUR FEET! DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE COPY AT RUE-MORGUE.COM NOW. HYMNS II WILL ONLY BE AVAILABLE UNTIL JULY 31, 2011. AFTER THAT, IT'S GONE FOREVER!

"SHHH..."

THE DARKEST OF THE HILLSIDE THICKETS

DAVE NOVIKOFF

"When a murderer's gory experiments are discovered by his spouse, he promises to quit his grisly hobby and make amends as long as she doesn't tell anyone. Currently 'Shhh...' is only available as downloadable content for the Rock Band video game from Harmonix and will appear on the forthcoming TDoHT release tentatively titled *The Ultraviolet Album*."

— TOMB DRAGOWIR

Since 1992, *The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets* — named after a line in H.P. Lovecraft's story "The Tomb" — have pressed the author in cosmic horror tales, spin-

ning their obsession with tentacle creatures and a collective musical quest for the Medusomicon into undeniably catchy blasts of punky nerd rock. Lovecraft's heady "forbidden knowledge" may be unlikely fodder for kickin' out the jams, but the British Columbia quartet will be the first to point out that Cthulhu could probably shed some pretty mean guitar. TT

THICKETS.NET

"ZOMBIES, MARCH!"

GWAR

METAL BLADE

"Before I return to my buffet of fecal ridgets, a quick overview of what's going on with this song... well, let me give it a listen... hmms... that sounds like a band with real balls — big, swinging, pendulous ones, cov-

ered in yak fur! What? This is my band? Well, of course I knew that. After all, aren't I ruler of Earth? And people like me are supposed to be pretty smart. This song is part of a four-part super-song on our new album *Bloody Pit of Horror*, so if you like it, you'll like the whole super-song four times more! But that won't save you. I still require your head on a pole. HAIL, GWAR!" — ODERUS URUNGUS

"Welcome once again to this bloody pit, my friends!" proclaims the first line of GWAR's "Zombies, March!" With that, our beloved Scumdogs rip into a militant call to arms. No, not guns, but actual arms — the song's about raising a zombie army, after all. Heavy, anthemic and belligerent, this is the veteran band at the top of its gross game. DA

GWAR.NET

"BLOOD WILL HAVE BLOOD"

CORPUSSE

IN-HAT RECORDINGS

"Within the sequence of my new record *Honey & Lo-cuts*, 'Blood Will Have Blood' is one chapter of a thick wet covenant to everything that flows red in my life. I hope it takes you somewhere." - **CORPUSSE**

Surrender to the Passion is both the name of a new documentary about poorly-haired performance art rocker Corpuse and an instruction for listening to his music: "Blood Will Have Blood" is a mind-bending mantra driven by an industrial beat and swarming synth, building to a vocal climax that threatens to turn the imposing Canuck inside out. Every bit as bizarre and captivating as Corpuse himself, crank this one up and wait for the hell-mouth to open. **DA**

CORPUSSE.TUMBLR.COM

"BORN ON A DAY THE SUN DIDN'T RISE"

BLACK MOTH SUPER RAINBOW

GRACE/NOIRIES

"A day in the life of a besuited fellow whose big thrills are practicing good dental hygiene and toasting hot dogs. With a big day ahead, he's recruited the friendly girls from next door to give him a hand. Lucky for him, the girls know just what it takes to put smile on a man's face." - **RYAN GRAVEFACE**

Don't be fooled by their sweet demeanour. While you might think this band is trying to give you a hug, they're actually leaning in to tear a chunk out of your Analog electronics set Pittsburgh's BMSR apart from your standard noise pop band, as they combine saccharine melodies with disturbing lyrics and B-movie horror videos. Similar in style to My Bloody Valentine, and joined here by Fleming Legs producer Dave Fridmann, BMSR is definitely a change of pace from your typical horror-themed musical experience. **JS**

BLACKMOTHSUPERRAINBOW.COM

"13 O'CLOCK ROCK"

THE MEMPHIS MORTICIANS

INDEPENDENT

"A mutant stompably slap howl that's been slithering around the febrile swamps of Memphis, Transylvania for years now, stewed in a bottle of sweat and fake blood, and released on an unsuspecting world. This one was originally recorded for the upcoming *Beneath It Or Not* album but set aside for *AM*. Listen if you dare, you have nothing to lose but your brain cells. Lots and lots of brain cells." - **TRASH ONLY**

The Memphis Morticians score primitive, corpse-shaking trashability custom cut for dirty bars, sleazy folk and good-time ghoulies on the go. These four dapper dudes have been rocking and rolling the bones for more than a decade, nipping their rockabilly rumble and nightgown reverb through the mortuary halls and bathroom stalls, with a groove so infectious even the dead rise up and boogie down! **TM**

MEMPHISMORTICIANS.COM

"YOU CAN'T GIVE ME ANYTHING"

KREEPS

EX-TIME RECORDS

"I hung out with this girl who was into blood play and each time we'd push it a little further. Some nights I'd

wonder, how long 'til you can't give me anything? We sat in a hospital waiting room one night when it came on the news that the police had busted a huge sex cult right around the corner from where I was staying. They'd been holding a woman captive for weeks in there. Now it seems like just a bad dream but at the time I thought I was turning into some kind of giant insect." - **DOM KREEP**

Reclusive but prolific, Manchester's Kreeps are a vibrant, genre-mashing Frankensynth's monster of surf, R&B and apocalyptic rock that captured our inky hearts as divinely last year that we named their second album, *Dead Sounds*, the best of the year (*RMF* 103). Band leader Dom Kreep naked life and limb rooting around in the band's bottomless tickle trunk to contribute this previously unreleased gem, which sounds like the Fluxus twinkling in the red-light district. **TD**

KREEPSMUSIC.COM

"SUCK ME"

SPOOKLIGHT

(FEATURING RYAN LINDSEY)

INDEPENDENT

"In the summer of 1975, a small TV station known as CBC chose Commerce, Oklahoma, as the location for the pilot of a new independent series, *Suck Me*. A dark comedy about a redneck vampire family, it began shooting October 3 of that year, but halted when a lighting truss collapsed on the cast, crushing one, electrocuting another, and paralyzing the youngest from the waist down. This song was to be the theme song for the show. Although the pilot was never completed, the script was later uncovered in a Tulsa archive and became the basis for the *Twilight* books." - **BRIAN WEBB**

Taking its moniker from a phenomena called The Horset Spooklight - an orb or light cluster that can be seen dancing around the highways at night in an area of Oklahoma known as "The Devil's Popoverade" - Spooklight is a duo inspired by the ghost stories and urban myths that litter the small community. From these tales, the band has built an arsenal of creepy canbices that are as fun as they are tororous. Put this in your iPod and shuffle it. **JS**

MYSAPCE.COM/SPOOKLIGHTYELLOWFIRE

"A QUESTIONABLE OBSESSION WITH THE RECENTLY DECEASED"

RAMMER

SCHENBERG RECORDS

"Quite a mouthful, that title. Somewhat fitting given that the whole inspiration for this song trickled down from the grand master of on-site prose himself, Sir Howard Phillips Lovecraft. I've always been a hopeless fanatic of the film version of *Re-Animator*, but this tune ended up paying more homage to the original story as it became fleshed out. Death, murder, madness, reanimation, wiccan whitewind rifts, nipping solos and frantic screams - I'm sure the old soul from Providence would cover his ears in disgust." - **DAVE KRISTIANSEN**

We here at *AM* have our own questionable obsessions and one of 'em is this now-defunct Toronto trash outfit's crusty legacy of speeding devastation. This previously unreleased soundtrack from beyond the grave, available on the band's posthumous *Siege of Madness LP* (but later this year), gets in quick and does its damage before you even realize you've just sucked in your last breath. **TT**

MYSAPCE.COM/RAMMERMAIN





"BAD RITUAL" TIMBER TIMBRE

ARTS & CRAFTS

"Bad rituals, bad habits, falling into cyclical patterns that at times are obsessive and self-defeating but comforting in familiarity. I made a long list of bad rituals for this song and it seemed like a really long list before it was finished. It was cathartic. It calmed me down. Listen for Colla Station's voodoo sax lines in the choruses." — **TAYLOR KIRK**

The backwoods of Ontario are full of old ghosts and strange folks practicing arcane rituals. This is the headspace of Taylor Kirk, who along with collaborators Mike Posen and Simon Trotter comprises the folk collective Timber Timbre. The group's newly released fourth effort, *Deep on Deep* (On), continues the tradition of using antique instrumentation and hushed, cryptic vocals to invoke an earthy, eerie sound, perfectly exemplified by chilling a burn opener "Bad Ritual." — **DA**

TIMBERTIMBRE.COM

"PHANTOM CHOP" THE VON DRATS

STEREO DYNAMITE RECORDINGS

"A somber-weirding spectacle? Zombie karate? Kneecap-smashing whitecaps? No matter how you cut it, "Phantom Chop" is the sm-surf-in'-est groove this side of Loch Ontario! Our crew has paddled way out to bring back a killer Dratsy-funkian folk song to make your ears fall off. Crow-a-bunga!" — **LEONARD VON DRAT**

Garage surf goats The Von Drats show why they could probably transform the solemnity of a mausoleum into an instant, legendary shaker on this raucous instrumental cut of haunted hot rod wreckage from the band's recently released debut, *Dratsylvania*. Known to dress alike and all answer to the name von Drat, the six-piece is the epitome of horror fun on "Phantom Chop," which exudes so much spooky spunk it'll make you twist like you've got spiders in your pants. **TT**

VONDRATS.COM

"CRUSHED" THE CRYPT CLUB

INDEPENDENT

"This song is the result of two unrelated factors: a full bottle of red wine and the creation of an imagined scenario involving death and suicide. Somewhere in that wine-steeped haze I fell upon a lyrical thread: 'Tonight I'm feeling fine, cutting on a dotted line / Tonight I'm feeling fine, but I need more wine this time.' From that moment I built a scenario about a man tormented by the death of a woman and the thought of suicide." — **ERLE**

From the ashes of defunct Montreal death rockers Borderline has risen The Crypt Club, four fellows with a taste for freakishness and fuzz pedals. A little bit goth, a little bit garage, these dusky young men carry the weight of the world on a wine-soaked blanket on this cut, which is bled from a limited-run disc they only sell at live shows. If The Cure is too feel-good for you, you may wish to join The Crypt Club. **LL**

MYSPEACE.COM/THECRYPTCLUBMUSIC

"WRONG TURN" THE YOUNG WEREWOLVES

WEREWOLF ENTERPRISES

"This outtake from our second album, *Cheer the Devil*, warns of Chivalry and his friends and the dangers of playing with things you don't understand and have no control over (even though you think you do). The opening of gates incorrectly and general arrogance has been the downfall of many a spiritual traveler. We hope H.P. Lovecraft would be proud of this song. It's dedicated to his memory." — **"SHEWOLF" DANA KAIN**

Since forming in 2012, this unholy trinity from Philadelphia has transformed from a Ramones-meets-Buddy Holly psychobilly outfit into a fully formed retro spookshow. This 1950s-style death song uses shadowy surf guitar, Kain's throaty howl and a skulking tempo to lurk into cosmic territory, serving as a cautionary tale about the unpredictability of crossing over into other monstrous worlds. **LL**

THEYOUNGWEREWOLVES.COM

"MONSTER" THE MISSION CREEPS

RAMSCORP RECORDS

"'Monster' is inspired by the twisted cultural perceptions of beauty and wealth in our society and how horrific that has become. Tie that in with misrepresentation and the defrauding of all of us by banks and the government, and it gets even scarier. Mix in some Orwellian imagery of the current surveillance state of Hollywood and The Man and you've created a monster that you don't even know." — **JAMES ABBR**

Named after a military term that, according to the band, means sticking to an assured path of unstoppable self-destruction, The Mission Creeps' plodding "secret alternate take" of "Monster" — which appears in its original form on the band's second album, *Dark Cells* — is a prime exhibit of the dastardly creations the Arizona trio has spawned with its collective affinity for B-movie beasts, spooky surf tunes and seedy punk toots. **TT**

MISSIONCREEPS.COM

"VIOLET HELPFIRE" CALABRESE

SPOOKSHAM RECORDS

"We were listening to a lot of music, everything from early AFI to Earth AD from the Misfits, anything from our favorite bands. When we recorded [our third release] *They Call Us Death*, we laid down 'Violet Hellfire' first. After hearing it on playback we knew the new wave was heading in the right direction. Heavier, darker and catchier as all hell." — **JIMMY CALABRESE**

Who you callin' "horror punks"? The Calabrese brothers may have once fed on Halloween and midnight movies but these long-time Run Morgue favorites exploded right out of the genre ghetto with their third album, *They Call Us Death*. This sample track from the horror trio — the members of which also appear as themselves in a number of indie flicks, including *The Grapes and Blood on the Highway* — is full-throated: not 'n' roll, monster riffs and blistering riffs. **LL**

CALABRESEROCK.COM



TIMBER TIMBRE: JAMES ABBR; THE YOUNG WEREWOLVES: JAMES ABBR

"CAN'T STOP THE MONSTER KIDS"
THE OTHER

FEAR FORCE

"The bonus track on the limited edition of our current album *Nisw Blood*, this is a little different than our regular horror punk sound and may remind some listeners of '70s punk rock with a little '80s metal twist. The lyrics are obviously inspired by Forrest J Ackerman, because deep in our hearts, we are all still monster kids. We like to be scared, we are frowned upon by others, we roost for the outsider, we wear black clothes and listen to weird music. We are all devoted to the genre and will remain so until our dying day."

- **ROD USHER**

Resembling post-apocalyptic undead superhumans, The Other stake a claim as the most popular horror punk band in all of Europe. Fronted by Usher, who sings with enough power to light all of Düsseldorf, the gruesome German foursome churn out sonic shrapnel comprised of death rock, fast-pumping power metal and shout-along choruses that hit ya like a simultaneous punch to the chops and kick in the ass. **TD**

THROTHER.DE

"GET UP AND KILL"
THE CREEPING CRUDES

SHRIMP RECORDS

"This song is a heartfelt ballad of enduring love between a weeping dead man and his favorite pastime. Told from both the perspective of the dead man and his 'meal,' it's a sweet, tender refrain that leaves no eye dry. Adapted from a sensitive poem... eh, who are kidding? It's a wacky rock 'n' roll tune about killing!" - **JEAN ROID**

The Creeping Crudes have been terrorizing Nashville for over a decade with pedal-down, high-octane, good old-fashioned punk rawk for old-school monster ghoulies and gals. With this brand-new serving of murderous filth, which isn't currently available anywhere else, the tongue-in-cheek Tennessee terrorists show why shock-and-kill monster battles for howling at the moon are their business, and business is good! **TD**

JEANROID.COM

"BIRTHDAY"
SO SICK
SOCIAL CLUB
(FEATURING MADCHILD)

INDEPENDENT

"'Birthday' is a revenge track based around a child who's forced to invite his classmates to his party, even though he is considered the token 'loser' in the class. He ends up slaughtering the partygoers and is left sitting at an empty kitchen table enjoying his cake around a room full of gutted, massacred mates." - **CHRIS SO SICK**

Designed to offend, this rude, crude crew from Toronto mixes metal, rock and hip hop into a horror stew that boils over with blood and violence. On this particular ode to evil birthday party behaviour, the rotten bastards have recruited Madchild of Swirlin Members to detail his own list of atrocities. Listen and weep. **DA**

MYSPACE.COM/SOSICKSOCIALCLUB

"TONGUE SANDWICH"
(WATER CREATURE REMIX)
SQUID LID

INDEPENDENT

"The reason behind the song's title remains a mystery even to us, as the original journal documents of the track's evolution were lost in the great studio flood of 2010. Everything that wasn't nailed down was washed away into the darkness of the deep seas." - **JAMES ZIRCO FISHER**

When he isn't sketching skeletal remains for RM's "Disfigures of Speech" cartoon, Fisher and his pal Jonah K make up the two-headed mad scientist monster that is Squid Lid. The electronic duo showed up in neon hyper glow circus masks to deliver us an exclusive remix of this ominous carnival grind (the original can be found on their 2009 debut album, *Steavi Powered Submarine*), which features skin-crawling samples from *The Thing*, Kitar Klowne from *Outer Space* and the making-of doc for *Saw III*. **TT**

SQUIDLID.COM

"SCREAMING"
THE BRAINS

STOMP

"We wrote 'Screaming' with the intention of making a song that was fast, hard-hitting, and [capable of] inciting a violent, uproarious response in the wracking pit. It's about being haunted by your test kit. We chose this song for our latest video, which is inspired by snuff films. More brains!" - **COLIN THE DEAD**

Typically, when a band gets "into your head," you don't expect them to actually be trying to gain access to the contents of your skull. So beware, Montreal's The Brains is arguably just as interested in inspiring a sing-along to one of its undead psychobilly freak-outs as it is in festooning on the crowd's screaming gray matter. Take this opening cut from the trio's third album, *Zombie Nation*, which will undoubtedly have you changing your bunnies for manny into desperate ones for more. **TT**

MYSPACE.COM/THEBRAINS

"OLIVER MADDO"
BLOOD CEREMONY

RISE ABOVE THE BLADE

"We tried to conjure a sort of 'pulp-horror' atmosphere in the description of a black mass. The song idea came together from a patchwork of Hammer horror scenarios, and the title was adopted from Somerset Maugham's 1908 novel, *The Magician*. Maugham's character was based on real-life Magus, Aleister Crowley, whom the author knew from his time spent in Paris. I think Ale's sinister organ tones add a secret element to this tale of black magic." - **SEAN KENNEDY**

While you might think your stereo just did a rollback to the '70s, you've actually been sucked down into the musical wrath of occult ensemble, Blood Ceremony. With a sound somewhere between Black Sabbath, Jethro Tull, Sabbath Assembly and Black Widow, and featuring Ale O'Brien's haunting vocals and chilling organ grinds, the group has been gaining a devout sect of followers since 2008. This track from the Toronto quartet's latest album, *Living with the Ancients*, will trip you up, freak you out and baptize you in hellfire. **JS**

MYSPACE.COM/BLOODCEREMONY



THE OTHER



THE CREEPING CRUDES



SO SICK SOCIAL CLUB



SQUID LID



THE BRAINS



BLOOD CEREMONY

MEMENTO MORGUE



AW correspondents Faltan Delage (top left) and Geoffrey Bianchi (top right) with Denis Argento, and introducing horror fans at France's Fantastic Arts Horror and Sci-Fi Festival to Rue Morgue this past January



Psycho horror punkers The Creepshow shatter a capacity crowd at the St. Patty's Day Massacre show in Toronto (Mar. 17).

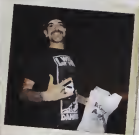




RM Editor-in-Chief Dave Alexander gouges off with writer Leigh Whannell (left) and director James Wan (right) at the Toronto premiere of *Insidious* (Mar. 17).



Paranormal Activity 2's Micah Slovi poses with the Rue Crew after a screening of the film at the Rue Morgue House of Horror.



Cropsey co-director Joshua Zeman interviewed via Skype for RM's Cinemascope screening, plus prize winners trade trivia answers, and sometimes snakes, for goodies.



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DRAWN & QUARTERLY'S NEW
Melvin Monster
COLLECTIONS REVEAL ONE
OF THE FUNNIEST, FINEST KIDS'
HORROR COMICS OF THE 1960s

A MONSTER KID for Monster Kids

PAUL GORUPE

JUST BECAUSE OLDER KIDS IN THE MID-1960s COULD DELVE INTO SPOOKY HORROR COMICS SUCH AS *CREEPY* AND *BORIS KARLOFF TALES OF MYSTERY* DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEY GOT TO HAVE ALL THE FUN. Lurking on a more accessible newsstand shelf, Dell Comics' *Melvin Monster* may have been intended for youngsters, but its timeless warmth and wit – not to mention its spooky twists – place it among the best horror comics of its time. Originally created by revered comic artist and writer John Stanley, the entire nine-issue run of *Melvin Monster* has now been re-released as part of Drawn & Quarterly's *John Stanley Library*.

"By the time *Melvin* came along, the 1960s monster craze was already in full swing," notes cartoonist and comics historian Seth, who designed the handsome new *Melvin Monster* books. "The Shock Theater package of old horror films for TV created a whole generation of kids who were salivating for more monster material. Famous Monsters of Filmland had been out for at least six years and *The Addams Family* TV show had been around for about a year. *Melvin* seemed perfectly crafted to get those monster kids' dimes – well, twelve cents actually."

Drawn & Quarterly's third and final volume of *Melvin Monster*, released this spring, is overflowing with slapstick gags and ghostly monster puns. Stanley, who also drew kids' comics *Little Lulu* and *Nancy*, casts *Melvin* as a spookhouse reflection of his mischievous peers, a happy, green-skinned youngster whose pleasant behaviour frustrates his creepy parents, Mummy and Daddy. When *Melvin*'s not being harassed by his witchy neighbour, Little Horror, or awaking his hungry pet alligator Cleopatra, he's usually down at the schoolhouse, trying unsuccessfully to enroll in the empty school run by Miss McGargoye.

"The codes of behaviour in *Monsterville* are upside down, much like the Bizarro world in *Superman* [comics] – polite behaviour is seen as rude, meanness is niceness, and it's the humans who are the monsters," observes Seth, who became a fan of the title after finding some old issues languishing in the bins at comic book conventions. "The surprising thing is that it's a wonderfully funny and sweet comic book. John Stanley was such a good writer that no matter what he turned his hands to, it came out great."

Aside from allowing Stanley to indulge in spine-chilling accoutrements such as basement-dwelling monsters and clawed hands emerging from pencils, *Monsterville*'s unique character grants him a freedom unseen in his conventional titles. *Melvin* runs along the ceiling and hides in the stove when one of his monstrous relatives comes over for a visit, while his Frankenstein-like father frequently smashes holes in the walls and floors of their haunted house. Most stories begin with Stanley introducing a gag and then building

on it until it reaches absurd, physics-defying proportions, giving *Melvin* an off-the-wall flavour that wouldn't be too out of place in *Mad Magazine*.

"These stories are actually funny, to both kids and adults," notes Seth, who's also known for his illustrated covers for *The New Yorker* and Criterion Collection DVDs. "Stanley seemed to be primarily trying to amuse himself, and that lively made him a better writer than most of his peers. Stanley's work doesn't talk down to the reader; it's smart. His comics are that rare pop culture treasure – top quality junk that transcends its shoddy origins. ... It's nice to try to give a bit of respect to artists like Stanley – guys who would have never expected it."

But while the creepy content and pop culture significance of these new *Melvin Monster* books make them attractive to older fans, Seth hopes that Stanley's spookily warped world of *Monsterville* will make its biggest impression on those it was originally created for: kids with a budding love of horror.

"I deliberately packaged the books to feel like a fancy library of hardcover children's books," notes Seth. "I want kids to read this stuff and fall in love with it. I want them to grow up and pass it along to their kids as well."

MELVIN
MONSTER



CINEMACABRE

FILM + DVD + REISSUES



UNCLE SAM CONQUERS THE MARTIANS

BATTLE: LOS ANGELES

Starring Aaron Eckhart, Michelle Rodriguez and Bridget Moynahan
Directed by Jonathan Liebesman
Written by Christopher Barbarino
Sony

The bigger the budget, the more populist the film — it's the rule of Hollywood economics. *Independence Day* was made for \$75 million, stars A-lister Will Smith and has the president of the United States blasting aliens in a fighter jet. *District 9*, made for \$30 million, stars an unknown whose character is slowly turning into a repulsive alien, and it takes sharp jabs at big business, government and xenophobia. *Battle: Los Angeles* was made for \$70 million — guess which film it resembles more?

Though its battle scenes, documentary-style camerawork and alien technology designs are heavily influenced by *D9*, thematically and politically *Battle: Los Angeles* may be the world's most expensive recurring video. We follow Sgt. Michael Natz (Aaron Eckhart) as he hands in his papers to retire from the Marines, leaving some very obvious exposition about his men getting killed

in a firefight in the process. We then meet a group of younger Marines on the base, witness strange meteors falling into the ocean just off the beaches off of California, see news footage of alien soldiers invading the coastal cities of the world and it's game on. Natz joins a group of Marines sent on a mission to rescue survivors holed up in a police station. On the way, they meet up with some other soldiers, including a communications specialist played by

Michelle Rodriguez, who tell them that the invaders are making quick work of the humans. Soon, with civilians in tow (including one played by Bridget Moynahan), they have to fight their way to safety before the airforce levels the area. Many things go boom in the process.

Battle: Los Angeles does what blockbuster action movies do best and punches us in the brain pan with huge special effects, cool weaponry, gross-looking aliens and a thundering soundtrack that oscillates between subtle and brilliant, and bombastic and cheesy. In a film that's basically a video game reminding us how shi-awesomely radical it is to be saving the day in camouflage, that ain't surprising. Eckhart proves again that he's a reliable performer as he adds a bit of gravitas to the flimsy plot,

but eventually he's no match for the awful patriotic dastardies

Courage is going into battle. Playing it safe is making a middle-of-the-road blockbuster with more waving flags than challenging ideas

DAVE ALEXANDER

MOVE ON, HAMMER FANS

THE RESIDENT

Starring Hilary Swank, Jeffrey Dean Morgan and Christopher Lee
Written by Antti J. Jokinen and Robert Der
Directed by Antti J. Jokinen
Image

The latest offering from the relaunched Hammer Studios, *The Resident*, which was actually shot and slated for release before the company's previous effort, the well-regarded *Let Me In*, hit theatres this past October. Finally making its North American premiere via a straight-to-video release (after a short theatrical run in the UK), *The Resident* is disappointing to Hammer fans anxious to see the company return to its former glory.

Modelled after the studio's "mini-Hitchcock" suspenseers of the 1960s, such as *Scream of Fear*, the film stars Oscar-winner Hilary Swank as doctor Juliet Devereaux, who is looking for a place to live following a recent break-up. She eventually finds a spacious, loft apartment owned by Max (Jeffrey Dean Morgan/Watchmen), a handsome, charismatic guy who looks



BLOOD ON A BUDGET

INDIE AND D.I.Y. FILMS REVIEWED

after his sick grandfather, August (Sir Christopher Lee). Max is willing to help her out around the place and even keep her company. However, when Juliet decides to patch things up with her ex, her sociopathic landlord is none too happy, and his already obsessive interest in her — spying voyeuristically through hollowed-out wall sockets, a two-way mirror in her washroom, etc. — escalates to a murderous level.

Featuring a polished, sophisticated look (with cinematography by Guillermo Navarro: *Por's* *Labyrinth*), and headlined by a highly respected cast, *The Resident* is a lost opportunity for something unique. The problem lies not only in the concept — which has been done before in films such as *Fatal Attraction*, *Pacific Heights* and *Silver* — but also with the writing and direction. Numerous opportunities to create suspense, flesh out characters or establish motivation are overlooked in favour of tired, clichéd plot devices. Admittedly, Swank looks great and no doubt many viewers will appreciate playing voyeur with Max as Juliet spends much of the film walking around in only her panties. And, as great as it is to see Sir Christopher Lee, his talents are underemployed; his screen time amounting to only a few minutes.

The Resident isn't horrible but this bare-bones release (the only extra is a trailer) of an unremarkable film is probably not the return to filmmaking Hammer fans had in mind.

JAMES BURRELL

A PULSE AT LAST

HEARTLESS

Starring Jim Sturgess, Noel Clarke and Ciara Poley
Written and directed by Philip Ridley
IFC

Nineteen-ninety was a great year for director Philip Ridley. His script about a couple of mob brothers was turned into a stylish gangster flick called *The Krays* by Peter Medak (*The Changeling*), and he also premiered his directorial debut, the uber-weird and stunningly unique American Gothic fable *The Reflecting Skin*. And though the latter would wink in and out of theatres in North America, those who got a glimpse of it could see that a bold new visionary had arrived.

Five years later, Ridley followed it with *The Passion of Darkly Noon* starring Viggo Mortensen and Ashley Judd. Then... nothing. Dead silence. The millennium came to a close, the dawn of a new age in cinema arrived, and the man who may have been Britain's most interesting export had seemingly vanished into the ether.

Until now. Well, 2009 actually, which is when this film — his first in fourteen years — premiered on the festival circuit, only to eventually secure this belated and relatively quiet release courtesy of IFC.

Heartless stars Jim Sturgess (*Across the Universe*) as Jamie, a terminally shy photographer with a birthmark that extends across his face and body. But the real scars are all on the inside, and when he discovers that the street thugs who dominate the East London community in which he lives are actually some sort of reptilian creatures, we are left unsure if anyone else is seeing what he does.

Long shadows grow longer, and Jamie is drawn deeper into the intrigue, eventually meeting a mystical gangster named Papa B who persuades him to become a killer himself, and a young Indian girl who may or may not be his conscience. There's also a love story, an arms dealer who dowses for weapons and a pretty gruesome head-rolling scene.

Gorgeously photographed and completely unique, *Heartless* doesn't ever achieve clear focus and its many diversions — from weirdly engrossing to silly jump scares — seem too scattered for the heartless ending to ram home. Still, it's a welcome return for a director who is more interesting in his failures than most others are with their successes.

RODRIGO GUZÓN

GODSPEED

Robert Sallis
godspeedindiefilm.com

If there's one thing Sarah Palin and The Learning Channel have taught us, it's that Alaska is a breeding ground for crazy, and this movie only furthers the notion. Set in a

small Alaskan town, *Godspeed* follows a preacher of sorts named Charlie, who claims he has the ability to heal people with the power of God. His followers are unaware he's also a philandering alcoholic, however. His life comes crashing down when his wife and son are inexplicably murdered, shaking his faith beyond repair. Six months later, the killers remain at large and Charlie's hit rock bottom. He's called upon by a girl who needs his help to heal her father, but things go bad and Charlie soon finds himself in trouble with a backwoods cult led by the girl's psychotic brother. The rest of this predictable, poorly paced movie is interesting enough for viewers to want to see how it ends, but that's mostly due to the interesting premise, believable performances and top-notch production. If only poor Charlie could have used his powers to edit it better.

MIKE BEARDSALL

VS. THE DEAD

Phil Pattison and Jill Beckman
myspace.com/indiefilm

After a promising opening scene involving zombie terrorists, *Vs. The Dead* deteriorates quicker than the skinbags themselves. The set-up, the government has invented a secret chemical to reanimate dead soldiers.

Of course, something is bound to go horribly wrong in any movie plot in which the words "secret," "chemical" and "government" appear together. Here, a container of the toxic substance ends up at a sketchy tattoo parlour, with a shipment of new ink. You can probably predict how that pans out. What follows is 90 minutes of bad acting, cheesy dialogue and excessive use of artificial film grain and other effects that try to make the project's pitfalls seem purposeful. I wish I could praise it for more than just a funny poster in the police station scene (advertising a seminar on how to use your moustache as a weapon), but the whole thing smacks of an R-rated episode of *Scooby-Doo*. If this film is any indication of how cliché the undead genre has become, it's high time that zombie flicks took a much-needed rest in peace.

MIKE BEARDSALL



BORE-HEMOTH

BEHEMOTH

Starring Ed Quinn, Pascale Hutton and William B. Davis
Directed by David Hogan
Written by Rachelle S. Rowe
Syfy

A lot of recent Syfy channel flicks serve as case studies in how not to make a giant monster movie, but even by their standards, *Behemoth* stands out as a particularly sorry example. Let's face it, anyone who's prepared to sit there ass-down through one of these [like *Lance*? See p. 47—Ed] is willing to endure bad CGI, pseudo-science they'd make Michael Bay's nutsack shivel, pressboard characters and plots that appear to have come in a kit from Ikea. We don't ask much, Syfy train trust, beyond this: you're not allowed to be boring. Specifically, you're not allowed to wait 67 minutes into a 90-minute movie before showing us more than a fleeting glimpse of your sub-Lovecraft, faux-Toho critter. Bad enough that all the god-damn thing does is sit atop a mountain going "Www-maaaauuuuppphh!" and snapping its jaws and flexing its tentacles, but we don't even get that until the last 23 minutes of the movie? For shame.

So, does anything else make *Behemoth* stand out from Syfy's cookie-cutter oeuvre? Well, it sure ain't the plot or dramatic personas. After a medley of suspicious seismic events in the Pacific Northwest (cue footage of majestic British Columbia mountains, forests and waterfalls), a government agent (Ty Dison), a scientist (Pascale Hutton) and her excavator/lumberjack/whatever ex-boyfriend (Ed Quinn) instinctively know something's afoot, even if they can't agree on the specifics. The scientist's elderly father (William B. Davis—yes, *The X-Files*-Smoking Man) is equally convinced that something big, ugly and apocalyptic is way comes, but he's repeatedly dismissed and admonished to take his meds.

Meanwhile, romances, bromances and unlikely new alliances forged during the crisis are put to the test. But still no monster. What to do? More shots of majestic mountains, forests and waterfalls, please, like a waiter bringing you a such basket of bread sticks as you await your long overdue main course.

Rumors persist that Syfy subjects its writers and directors to some pretty niggard rules to ensure product uniformity on these creature features. Couldn't they at least have one stipulating that the monster—however pathetic-looking—be revealed before the one-hour mark? Yeah, if it was good enough for *The Giant Claw*, what's stopping you?

JOHN W. BOWEN

TUNNEL VISION

STAG NIGHT

Starring Kip Pardue, Vanessa Shaw and Breckin Meyer
Written and directed by Peter A. Dowling
Ghost House Underground

Doesn't writer/director Peter Dowling know not to shit where he eats?

After a brief scene in which a bruised and beaten blonde succumbs to unseen creatures, *Stag Night*



Behemoth: A very rare glimpse of the beast.

opens with groom-to-be Mike (Kip Pardue), his loose-cannon brother Tony (Breckin Meyer) and two of their closest pals being

ejected from a strip joint. Hitting the subways of New York, they engage in the time-honored bachelor party traditions of noogies, dong jokes and drunken proclamations of man-love. Sharing their late-night subway ride are two hotties on their way home after their shifts at the very pecker bar the boys were booted from. Naturally, the fellows pour it on thick, prompting Brits (Vanessa Shaw) to drop her college textbook(!) and unlock a can of mace into Tony's kisser. In the scuffle, they all end up exiting the train straight into carnival territory, and the crumbling transit system sets the stage for the group's inevitable showdown with a snarling tribe of flesh-eaters.

For the savvy, most aspects of *Stag Night* will appear to rest lazily on the shoulders of everything previous. Nearly every single trope native to cannibal films, from the loony family (complete with *The Brute*, *The Shot Caller*, *The Spider Child* and *The Corpse Mother* positions neatly filled) to the band of loaded-up, conquest-driven white folks in hostile territory, is laid out in predictable fashion. The cannibals themselves split the difference between the crusty tubedweller from Gary Sherman's superior *Raw Meat* (1973) and the wacky, machete-wielding gut-munchers of Tsui Hark's *We're Going to Eat You* (1980), with a little help from Rob Zombie's stylish/dreadful *coach*.

Despite the set-up, Dowling still can't make much happen on screen. Creepy, underground locations and potentially gruesome gore gags are hampered by amateurish shaky-cam and digital slow-motion effects. The opportunity to create a world of violent, hungry cannibals is squandered by liberal borrowing from the most obvious hallmarks of the survival subgenre. Dowling, explaining the genesis of *Stag Night* in a making-of featurette states, "People generally say that the best way forward is to do a horror film." Sadly, his summation of the genre as nothing

but a career stepping stone shows in the final product. Don't bite the hand that feeds either, Pete.

TAL ZIMMERMAN

YOUNG ADULTS OF THE CORN

HUSK

Starring Wes Chatham, Devon Graye and C.J. Thomson
Written and directed by Brett Simmons
After Dark Films



There are those of us who don't ask much from a slasher flick. If it can scare us or surprise us, that's awesome, but it's not a requirement—just keep us entertained and show us someone getting their kidneys yanked out through their nose, and we're good to go. If the erstwhile owner of said kidneys is also cute and naked at some point, it's practically a cinematic gold mine.

Husk starts off promisingly, with a carload of young adults whose vacation is derailed when a flock of stupid or possibly depressed crows hurl themselves at their SUV. Birds pop like gory grapes all over the windshield, and the vehicle is quickly disabled. Utterly incapable of making a good decision, the kids split up, ignore the stinky scarecrows they find in a cornfield (that look and smell like rotting corpses) and head for a spooky, seemingly abandoned farmhouse. Not all of them make it there alive, but the dead don't stay dead either, victims are turned into murderous, arts-and-crafts zombies who are drawn to an antique sewing machine in the farmhouse.

Sounds awesome, right? For a few minutes, it sort of is. *Husk* doesn't really offer anything new, but it assembles its cannibalized elements in a charmingly nutso way. Besides its obvious *Children of the Corn* vibe, it's full of creepy, rustic Americana (the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*; effective ambient sound [High Tension], and some nifty self-mutilation [Dario Argento's *Masters of Horror* episode "Pelts"]). It even borrows from *Jaws*, as the characters are mostly safe as long as they stay out of the cornfield.

Sadly, it's also full of unintentionally hilarious lines ("The fucking corn! It's everywhere!"), clunky exposition and a convoluted back story. It even commits the cardinal sin of slasher movies: off-camera kills its first





OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE GETS CURSED OUT

DJINN NEEDS A TONIC



RED SANDS

Sorry

The Djinn are mythical creatures which, with the exception of Robert Kurtzman's *Wishmaster* series, are rarely featured in movies unless they're being lampooned as wish-granting, lamp-inhabiting genies. So I was pretty excited when I saw that director Alex Turner, whose debut film *Dead Birds* wowed me back in 2004, had decided to tackle the misrepresented entities. Set during the war in Afghanistan, *Red Sands* follows a group of American soldiers that

desecrates an ancient statue, which in turn releases a malevolent genie who kills them off in rather mundane and uninteresting ways. Though the acting is solid, the storyline is mind-numbingly boring and the CGI-rendered Djinn so laughably phony that I wanted to give Turner a magic lamp just so he could wish himself away from this curse of a movie.

BODY COUNT: 13

BEST DEATH: Soldier gets his head blown off... mostly

INDIANA CHONES

SANDS OF OBLIVION

Anchor Bay

I love Syfy's original line of made-for-TV movies. Where else will you find titles such as *Ice Spiders*, *Mega Snake* and *Cyclops*? True, the flicks might look cheap, but they do attract some decent actors and tackle storylines that other channels wouldn't touch with a ten-foot harpoon! Take this bizarre tale that begins in 1923 as legendary director Cecil B. DeMille finishes his silent version of *The Ten Commandments* and buries all of his monolithic sets in the desert

—along with an ancient Egyptian camp. Fast-forward to present day when a group of archaeologists dig up the sets and unwittingly unleash the scourge. Though the film is laughable at times, especially during its painfully long dune buggy chase, there's campy fun to be had watching a guy-in-a-rubber-suit monster ripping people's limbs off. Keep 'em coming, Syfy!

BODY COUNT: 21

BEST DEATH: Bulldozer decapitation

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOXLEITNER

BONE EATER

Lionsgate

Stop me if you've heard this before: a greedy land developer tries to hide the fact that his workers have uncovered an Indian burial ground and released an ancient curse. Just insert Bruce Campbell as the sheriff and add a shifty CGI monster (a cross between a Harryhausen skeleton and "The Fallen" Deception from *Transformers 2*), and you've got a bad Scooby-Doo episode. In one scene, it rides around on a skeletal steed chasing three guys on motorbikes,

and just when I thought it couldn't get worse, Bealiner hops on a horse to do battle with the malevolent beast—all while dressed in a kid's cowboy Halloween costume?! I didn't know whether to laugh or cry—so I did both.

BODY COUNT: 24

BEST DEATH: All the deaths are the same—victims turn to dust

half is effective, but it becomes repetitive and lazy as eerie atmospheres give way to shock chords and jump scares. It wanders aimlessly from one half-baked idea to the next, never settling on anything long enough to explore it properly.

At least it's devoid of postmodern rib-nudging, though. *Husk* is sincere and reasonably well-made, and it manages a few creepy moments here and there. If you enjoy goofy slasher flicks and aren't terribly demanding, there are worse places than the cornfields of *Husk* to get lost for 63 minutes.

APRIL SNELLINGS

LAUGH IT UP, FUZZBALLS...

HYENAS

Starring Costas Mandylor, Christa Campbell

and Amanda Riedman

Written and directed by Eric Weston

Lionsgate



It's been 42 issues now since I started writing for *RM* and Hyenas is the worst atrocity I've ever laid my eyes upon in service of the mag. Considering my most denunciatory past reviews—such as the one for *The Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde Rock 'n' Roll Musical* (*RM*#78), which I was certain would draw death threats from its creator, or the lambasting I gave *The Sick House* (*RM*#79), which inspired me to plead unsuccessfully with then-Managing Editor Dave Alexander to publish a five-word review, "More like *The Shit House*"—it's a dubious accomplishment indeed. Here's how *Hyenas* stacks up...

After a short scene where a woman and her baby are killed by some shapeshifters, a wiley narrator named Briggs (Meshach Taylor)—the kind of crazy old coot who no one believes—sets around a campfire and, while staring into the camera, lets the viewer in on the mystical existence of the killer hyenas, or... "cryptohumans" that live somewhere between Earth and the underworld." From there, we learn that the female Alpha of the hyena pack is dying and a balloon-breasted, tattooed floozy named Wilda (Christa Campbell: *Drive Angry 3D*) has designs on the post. Meanwhile, Briggs and his only friend, Gannon (Saw II - Saw 3D's Costas Mandylor), rescue a woman named Valerie mid-attack as they prowling around trying to kill off the cackling canines, who've hunted the area for years. In short, Gannon and Valerie fall in love, he vows to keep her safe from the hyenas, she ends up being a hyena (and sister to the aforementioned boobey heires to the throne), the two gals duke it out in their underground lair for the title, Valerie wins, but victory is fleeting as Gannon blows 'em all up. The end.

If only the hideously rendered CGI hyenas, with their red eyes and taunting laugh, were the worst infraction here. Obvious stunt doubles, racial stereotypes, wooden dialogue and makeup jobs worse than the ones shown on Halloween store packages are only a few of Hyenas' pratfalls, which had me cackling louder than any creature in the movie. Once I regained my composure, though, much to my dismay, the final scene actually set up a sequel. Writer/director Eric Weston may have the last laugh after all.

TREVOR TURMINSKI

LAST CHANCE LANCE

DESTRUCTIVE FICTION FROM PERMUTED PRESS

KINGS OF
THE DEAD



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TONY FAVILLE

EMPIRE'S
END



DAVID DUNWOODY

WINDS OF
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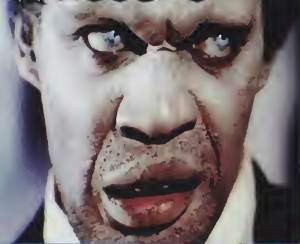
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REISSUES



NOT SO BLACK AND WHITE

DR. BLACK, MR. HYDE (1976) DVD

Starring Bernie Casey, Rosalind Cash and Marie O'Henry
Directed by William Crain
Written by Larry Leffron and Lawrence Washner
VCI Entertainment

Everything in Dr. Henry Pride's life is white: the walls of his apartment, his Rolls-Royce, his bed, his pyjamas, his lab coat. Everything, that is, except the colour of his skin.

Although rich and successful, Pride (Bernie Casey) spends one day per week in a free clinic in the Watts section of Los Angeles, where, in the words of his paramour (Marie O'Henry) — who is both a patient and a prostitute — he clears his conscience for having left the ghetto behind. While self-experimenting with a formula intended to regenerate dying liver cells, an unexpected side-effect turns the smooth-talking Pride into a grunting, Solomon Grumpy-like white monster who embarks on a murderous rampage, slaying prostitutes and pimps. Though the film is rather light on gore and blood, one of the

finer smackdowns sees the beastly ladies' man throw a polyester-jumpsuited 'ho across a parking lot and then run her over with his car.

By taking *Pride's* disconnection with his culture quite literally, this blaxploitation homage to Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* goes a little further than skin-deep on race relations compared to previous blaxploitation takes on classic horror films, such as *Blacula* (also directed by William Crain) and *Blackenstein*. But it doesn't waver from typical blaxploitation themes either. No matter how bad the pimps and drug dealers are, they're nothing compared to the pure evil of The Man. White, silk suit-wearing guys with feathered hair who drive Lincolns and seemingly possess all of society's power.

The only downsides to *Dr. Black, Mr. Hyde* are Casey's performance and some silly, stagey moments, such as Pride's first date with his aforementioned lady friend, where he sits in his car and weeps on for ages about his mother. The dude can act and

is a renowned tough guy — see *Hit Man* or *Cleopatra Jones* — but here his soft, personality-lacking performance hinders an otherwise

interesting film. Did he phone it in because he abhorred playing a character who would rather be grotesquely white (thanks to the effects of the late Stan Winston, no less) than black? Not to mention the fact that his pigment-altering formula, which can cure hepatitis and various diseases, carries a notion of eugenics and racial superiority.

Though appearing on DVD for the first time and touted as a "35th anniversary" edition, there is only a theatrical trailer in the way of special features. Chalk another one up for The Man.

ERIC VEILLETTE

WHISPER BEFORE A SCREAM

THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE! (1992) DVD

Starring Craig Peck, Wendy Bednarz and Mark Collier
Written and directed by Raife Kesselky
Troma

One character: "So you're saying we're in a movie?" Other character: "It's a distinct possibility." And the fourth wall came a-bumblin' down. Well, maybe not, but it's a familiar (and probably tired) device to anyone who's seen *Scream*, its sequels or any of its interminable bastard offspring. The catch is, the movie in question is none of the above; in fact, it predates *Scream* by six years. So is *Troma's* reissue of this seldom-seen cheapie an attempt to cash in on the recent release of *Scream 4*? Only Lloyd Kaufman and select members of his elite inner circle jerk can say for sure.

Despite similarities to Wes Craven's hit satire, *TND!!* is not a slasher film. The plot owes debts to *Alien*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *The Deadly Spawn*, *Shivers* and *Humanoids From the Deep*, and much of the camerawork is very obviously inspired by *The Evil Dead*. Still, the common traits with *Scream* are undeniable. Seven college kids take a road trip to a luxurious rural "cabin" for spring break, one guy who's seen every horror movie ever made compulsively takes note of suspicious goings-on and becomes convinced they're all doomed, much to everyone else's annoyance. Of course, he's right; a slime-oozing alien has landed nearby and appears to be on a mission to waste all the men and mate with the women. Once the other characters' cynicism has been sufficiently chipped away, they realize that their only hope is to follow the instructions of the horror nerd, who knows the genre's rules so well that he always seems to have an inkling of what's about to happen next, and what to do about it. Trouble



is, he's only right about half the time. Sound familiar?

The effects are cheap and frequently more laughable than the jokes, but writer/director Roite Kanetsky (*Nightmare Man*) does a lot with a little, and – bless him – gives us six breasts and one full-frontal before the twenty-minute mark, with more in store later. Troma's new two-disc edition has a good-looking 1.78:1 transfer, decent sound and loads of extras. You may not fall in love with this film, but it's hard not to like.

JOHN W. BOWEN

SHELL OF HIS FORMER SELF

GAMERA VS. ZIGRA (1971) DVD

Starring Kôji Yakyama, Gôjô Isuzu and Fûko Kasahara
Directed by Nisaku Yûkashi
Written by Nisaku Yûkashi

GAMERA: THE SUPER MONSTER (1980)

Starring Machi Furukawa, Yûko Koyama and Yûko Kozabû
Directed by Nisaku Yûkashi
Written by Nisaku Yûkashi
Shôchû Factory

He's lean, he's green and he's back to stomp some ugly space monster spleen – Gamera returns in Shôchû Factory's fifth and final release of the heroic turtle's original run of films. This time the creature trades fin-slaps with a fishy, intergalactic foe before taking on his most dangerous arch-villain: increasing irrelevancy.

Nisan Takahashi's script for *Gamera vs. Zigra* borrows liberally from his previous work. At least the aquarium setting offers a slight change of pace as invading aliens unleash Zigra, an aggressive shark-like creature that slices up Gamera's torso with razor-sharp scales during underwater battles. But after six *Gamera* films in about as many years, *G vs. Z* is all a little too familiar: the aliens can control minds, Gamera apparently dies at one point and kids in short pants come up with better military strategies than army brass. Only Gamera's final reel victory celebration is worth noting, as he plays his own theme song on the defeated Zigra's fins as though his foe were a xylophone.

Gamera probably – well, definitely – should have packed it in at this point, but the honourary "Friend to All Children" was dragged back to the screen almost a decade later for Daijû Studios' ignoble sequel, *Gamera: The Super Monster*. Released in 1981, when even *Godzilla* was in deep hibernation, this cut-rate effort is a bewildering mishmash of *Ultraman* and *Star Wars*. Warm-over clips of the same old meless taken from the first seven films are connected via an unapologetically stupid story about a trio of super-heroic women who moonlight as pet store employees.



Gamera's stock footage does all the real Earth-saving when aliens attack in what looks like an Imperial Cruiser model kit. But is all this city-smashing action just the vivid dream of a precocious boy (Koichi Maeda) who claims a psychic link with turtles? Um, probably.

Shôchû Factory has done another fine job on this release, but even a fresh coat of wax can't remove all the tarnish from the aging hero's reputation. *Godzilla: 1985* returned some respectability to kaiju films, but it wasn't until the 1995 *Gamera* remake that Daijû Studios lived down its late-period misbranding of the world's greatest giant monster – well, second-greatest, at least.

PAUL CORUPE

JUMP INTO THE FIRE

INFERNO (1980) Blu-ray

Starring Leigh McCloskey, Irene Miracle
and Eleonora Giorgi
Written and directed by Dario Argento
Blue Underground

Three years after releasing his 1977 Technicolor masterpiece *Suspense*, Dario Argento returned with the semi-sequel, *Inferno*. Lacking the gothic fairy-tale aesthetic and classic Goblin score, *Inferno* didn't quite equal its predecessor, but still stands as one of the legendary director's finest accomplishments.

While all Argento movies favour style over substance, his early *gialli* (see also *Deep Red*) were heavily plot-driven with carefully constructed mysteries. *Inferno* essentially abandons coherent storytelling in favour of cramming in as many gloriously neon-coloured kill sequences as possible. The result is a surrealistic cinematic nightmare more indebted to Luis Buñuel than Alfred Hitchcock.

Bake Out: Gory effects pop even more on the *Inferno* Blu-ray.




What little story there is involves a woman living in New York City, who discovers a book about the Three Mothers, a trio of mysterious evil witches that rules the world with "sorrow, tears and darkness." She soon learns that she actually lives perilously close to the youngest witch, Mater Tenebrarum, and everyone she tells about it gets killed in a creative fashion. That's pretty much the gist of it, but those kills are truly something special. Whether it's a disabled man getting murdered in Central Park by rats and a hot dog vendor, or the main character being pursued underwater by a corpse (a stunning sequence co-created by *Demons* director Lamberto Bava), Argento films his gory set pieces with the high style of surrealist art.

This stunning new Blu-ray presentation pops with vibrant colours, which will especially thrill viewers who appreciate certain illegal substances. The added detail does hurt the night scenes and sequences shot on location, though, which now have noticeably more grain. But that's a minor quibble. On a purely stylistic level, the film

is a masterpiece: its inspired visuals and artistic flourishes supersede the muddled storytelling and rigid acting. Extras include interviews with lead actors Leigh McCloskey and Irene Miracle, who tell hilariously candid stories about their awkward but enjoyable working relationship with Argento (Miracle was never told the entire plot while filming, and only received the script scene by scene), an old Argento interview from the original *Anchor Bay* DVD and the theatrical trailer (which is frankly one of the best ever produced). Ahhh... the Argento good old days.

PHIL BROWN





**ALEJANDRO
JODOROWSKY
SERMONIZES HIS "SACRED FILMS"
EL TOPO AND THE
HOLY MOUNTAIN.**

ALTAR DE SANGRE

BY STUART F. ANDREWS

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO LABEL CHILEAN-BORN SURREALIST FILMMAKER ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY A GENIUS. That term is so liberally applied today that it no longer holds much currency. In truth, he belongs to an elite group of super-geniuses, filmmakers such as George Melies, Sergei Eisenstein, Orson Welles, Stanley Kubrick and Jan Svankmajer, who radically shattered cinematic traditions in order to accommodate their unique visions.

After establishing himself in Paris as a writer, mime artist and theatre director, Jodorowsky returned to Mexico to make his first feature film in 1967, the surreal love story *Fando y Lys*. But he is perhaps best regarded for his 1970 acid western *El Topo*, which, with the support of influential celebrity admirers such as John Lennon and Yoko Ono, launched the "midnight movie" phenomenon at New York City's Elgin Theatre. This mystical western (or "east-on" as he calls it) stars the director himself as a mysterious, black-leather-clad figure who rides through a mythical desert landscape on a bloody quest to slay four monster gunfighters. It's a symbolically dense, bullet-riddled, hyper-violent allegory of one man's progress towards self-actualization.

Three years later, he plundered similar themes in his magnum opus *The Holy Mountain*, a visually hypnotic tale of nine adventurers in search of spiritual knowledge, led by a mysterious alchemist (once again played by Jodorowsky). It's such a politically explosive film, filled with so much violent, religious iconoclasm that it caused an uproar at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival and was disowned by the staunchly Catholic Mexico.

With these pictures, Jodorowsky was attempting something vastly ambitious. He was trying to make "sacred films," movies designed to engender an elevated sense of "enlightenment" in viewers. However, a massive falling out with former Beatles manager Allen Klein, who also controlled the distribution rights to Jodorowsky's films, kept them languishing in obscurity for more than 30 years. But the digital revolution has been kind to the filmmaker. In 2007, his films were reissued on DVD by STARZ/Anchor Bay, and now the company brings us *El Topo* and *The Holy Mountain* on Blu-ray, in brand new high-definition transfers approved by Jodorowsky himself. *Rue Morgue* speaks to the 82-year-old director on the phone from his home in Paris.

***El Topo* and *The Holy Mountain* are both examples of what you've termed as "sacred" cinema. What does that mean?**

For most filmmakers, their culture is cinema, they speak about cinema, they live in cinema. I don't see myself as an industrial filmmaker. I am a human being living all the metaphysical problems of a human person who will die and who doesn't know what the universe is. I live in the unknown. I don't know what God is. I don't even know what love is. I don't understand the ideology of the economic system. So why are you asking me something like that? I am an artist.

For El Topo, what attracted you to the western genre?

I was born in Chile, at the bottom of the world. When I was a child and saw pictures of cowboys, I never thought it was America. I thought it was a fairy tale, a magic country with cows and buffalos. So, for me, the western is not American. It's something like a magic world. So my idea was to make some kind of out-of-time, out-of-civilization magic.

You weren't originally going to play the title character in El Topo so why did you end up with the role?

No Mexican actor wanted to do it because they needed to grow a beard and shave their head. And for them it was weird, it was non-real, non-Mexican, so nobody wanted to do it. But I wanted to make the picture, so I said, "Bullshit! Nobody wants to do it? Then I will do it."

You've mentioned that the character of El Topo was influenced by Elvis Presley, especially with the black leather outfit. Why dress him in this western rock and roll attire?

Because I like it. I saw Elvis Presley for the first time in Paris. No intellectual wanted to see him. They despised [his act], they thought it was vulgar, that it was too ordinary. But I loved seeing this guy dressed in leather. That was a new time, it was like a fairy tale, not real. So I made a union between Elvis Presley and a Jewish rabbi.

EL TOPO



There's a lot of discussion surrounding the violence in El Topo. You've said you can't make a mystical picture without violence. How come?

Read the Bible. You will see a lot of violence, a lot of incest, a lot of war. Religion mixes with violence. Read the Qur'an. In Catholicism, there's hell and

evil. So what do you want? Read a newspaper today. See the television. See a woman making a child. You cannot make art without violence. Impossible.

There are a lot of dead, mutilated animals in El Topo. What's the story there?

I was in the north of Mexico and there was a hospital of beasts. They were dead anyway. They were going to kill them, they were ill, so I bought the animals and made my workers kill them. Listen, if you ask me this question, don't eat any more chickens and don't eat any more burgers. You understand that?

THE HOLY MOUNTAIN



Okay, I won't. But can you explain your fascination with people with physical disabilities – a recurring motif in your work.

For myself, they're a symbol. I show cripples because I am showing the inner illness of every one of us. In this society, we are all together in spiritual illness, psychological illness.

George Harrison from The Beatles nearly took the role of The Thief in The Holy Mountain. What made him change his mind?

I met him at the Plaza Hotel in New York. ... He was on a mystical trip and he wanted to do *The Holy Mountain* but he didn't want to do the moment where the alchemist cleans the anus of The Thief in front of the camera. I said to him that it's very fantastic for the ego to show your asshole on the screen. But he said, "No. Cut that and I'll do the picture." Myself, crazy as I was, I said, "No. I cannot because it's important for me to do that." So I chose an unknown person. Had I cut that moment, today I would be very rich because Harrison would've done the picture. But maybe he would've changed the picture? So maybe everything is good like that.

There was a lot of talk a few years ago about a sequel to El Topo. Is that still a possibility?

In 40 days, I will have the answer if I start to shoot or not. I have Russian producers and they're [looking into] shooting in Mexico. Anyway, I will make a picture this year. If not that, I will shoot a book I wrote called *The Dance of Reality* in the town where I was born. ... The Russians wanted big American stars. I fought for a year to convince them not to use stars because stars are the death of a good picture. With a star, the director is an employee. He's not an artist. If I don't use a star, I have less money to shoot, but I prefer to make a poor picture without a star than a rich picture with a star.



*Sacred Art: (from top) The Alchemist (Alejandro Jodorowsky) kneels between two women in *The Holy Mountain*, the titular gunslinger (Jodorowsky) of *El Topo*, and The Thief (Harrison Salinas) runs among decapitated Jesus mannequins in *The Holy Mountain*.*

You once said you were making films because you wanted to change the world. What made you believe that cinema was capable of doing this, and do you still feel this way today?

Yes, yes, only I make a little change. You cannot change the world but you can start to change it. I think movies are an art seen by millions of people, more than books. A book can change history. The Bible changed history. The Qur'an changed history. There are a lot of books that changed history – Freud, Einstein. Why can't pictures change the world? They cannot change the world now because it's an awful industry, but a good industry can change the world. We are forgetting the humanity in the chase to get money. But I didn't forget that I am a human being. I am not a businessman. I still believe we can change the world.



CLOUZOT BEFORE PSYCHO

DIABOLIQUE (1955) Blu-ray

Starring Simone Signoret, Véra Clouzot, and Paul Meunisse
 Directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot
 Written by Henri-Georges Clouzot, Jérôme Géronzi,
 Pierre Misonnier et al.
 Criterion

There's an old saying that suggests that if you go to the trouble of killing someone, you'd better make damn sure they stay dead—a philosophy that seems hauntingly appropriate for the entwined protagonists of Henri-Georges Clouzot's 1955 thriller *Diabolique*. The legendary French filmmaker unleashed this twisted tale (based on the novel *Celle qu'on n'était plus* by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac) as a follow-up to his 1953 masterpiece *The Wages of Fear*, which at the time was regarded as the most suspenseful film ever made. But where *Wages* played out its action on a grander scale, this stark new film chose to unveil its horrors on a far more intimate level.

The plot of the picture, whose original French title *Les Diaboliques* translates as "The Devils," concerns Christina (Véra Clouzot), the frail, devout Christian wife of tyrannical schoolmaster Michel (Paul Meunisse), who has been abusing her physically, sexually and emotionally for years. After being beaten and publicly humili-

ated by her calculating husband, who seems to have insidious designs on overtaking the second-rate boarding school she has inherited, Christina becomes a hesitant accomplice in a murderous plot designed by Michel's mistress, Nicole (Simone Signoret), who sports a black eye and bears similar resentments toward her lover. The two women proceed to lure their tormentor to a secluded hotel room in a nearby town, where a tainted bottle of wine leads to one of the film's classic set pieces (which is certain to make even semi-phobic viewers forever terrified to set foot in old clawfoot bathtubs). Upon their return, the women dispose of their handiwork in the algae-laden pool that lies on the school grounds, but when the murky waters are subsequently drained and no body turns up, our protagonists are thrown into a flurry of confusion and terror.

It is here that the film's tone shifts from Hitchcockian thriller to potentially supernatural chiller, as the dead man's suit turns up dry-cleaned and various children report seeing their harsh head-

master in the halls. A ghost-like reflection in a window proves to be the last straw before the apparition's weak-hearted widow spirals into madness, leading to a final act whose Gothic mise-en-scène of long empty hallways and slowly slinking shadows would not seem out of place in any given Hammer film.

Diabolique closes with another terrifying bathroom set piece, where the final water-soaked moments unveil the truly labyrinthine nature of the plot. In a modern context, this film may not seem that different from any number of similarly plotted thrillers, but viewers must realize that, in its day, this twisty chillfest was a veritable prototype, serving as the blueprint for myriad spook-outs to come. Legend has it that Alfred Hitchcock himself missed optioning the rights to this piece by mere hours, and then spent the next several years of his life trying to outdo its grand reveal—a goal he finally achieved with 1960's *Psycho*, whose own bathroom murder sequence was undoubtedly influenced by this earlier film. Hitchcock even lifted Clouzot's anti-spoiler warnings, requesting viewers not reveal what they had witnessed, and stipulating that no patrons would be admitted once the screening had begun.

A key element in the film's effectiveness is its frankness toward relatively adult subject matter, as is evident in an implied off-screen violation. Add to that a triptych of creepily intense performances, spearheaded by the director's actress wife Véra (who, oddly enough, died of heart failure five years after the film's release) and the innovation of employing almost no musical score (apart from the Bernard Herrmannesque intro), and *Diabolique*'s paranoid plot simmers with a quiet, sinister tension.

This water-drenched classic arrives this month on Blu-ray from Criterion. The transfer improves upon the company's previous incarnation, and this new edition also boasts some fascinating extras, including an informative

interview with film critic Kim Newman, who discusses the movie's initial impact and wide-reaching influence. The film's prologue suggests that "a painting is always quite moral when it is tragic and gives the horror of the things it depicts." If such is the case, then *Diabolique* paints a moral picture indeed.

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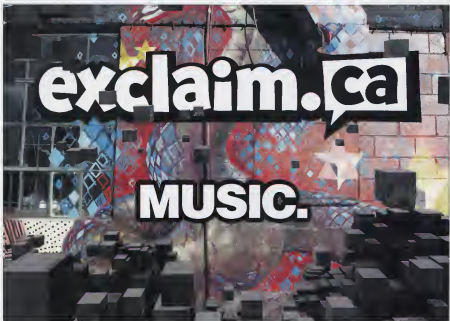
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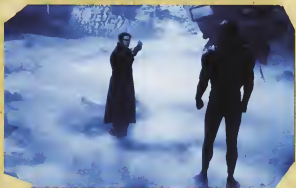


T CAME FROM BOWEN'S BASEMENT

R 

DRIVE-INS. DELETE BINS AND OTHER SINS

ALMOST A KEEPER
by John W. Bowen



The one that got away, the one that seemed so perfect in every way but turned out to be fatally flawed — yeah, we've all been in that relationship. But in this case, I'm talking about a film that swept me away with its fantastically original premise, breathtaking visuals, superb performances and lithe, lyrical script before cracks appeared in the surface during the second act and the whole thing took a crash dive into the shitter during the third. So why am I writing about it? For the same reasons we go back and reminisce about those lost loves, savouring everything that was good and trying to sort out what went wrong, no matter how pointless such an indulgence may be. We all do it. Come on. Don't be.

Unlike most of my usual column fodder, *The Keep* (1983) was a big-budget studio film based on a popular novel by F. Paul Wilson, directed by a then-hot new talent (Michael Mann) and boasting a cast (Jürgen Prochnow, Gabriel Byrne, Alberta Watson, Ian McKellen and Scott Glenn — are you fucking kidding me?) who, if not quite A-list at the time, would soon garner truckloads of critical accolades, just not for this

film. German synth gods Tangerine Dream's score still ranks among the group's most popular movie music (which, given the band's ubiquity in the early '80s, is saying a lot), even though not many of the cues made the final cut. It was one of the few films of the era — along with *Das Boot* (1981), the surprise breakout hit that first introduced Prochnow to North American audiences — to make a point of differentiating between regular World War II German soldiers and Nazis. *The Keep* is slick, gorgeous, expressionistic and thematically multilayered; sadly, it's also a complete and utter fucking mess.

Prochnow plays world-weary, sardonic Captain Klaus Woermann, who leads a platoon of German soldiers into a small Romanian mountain village in 1943,

ostensibly to stand guard against advancing Russian forces, although they don't expect to see much action. They resign themselves to a dull existence, waiting out the final days of the war, but upon arrival are unnerved by the sight of their new digs: a mysterious, oddly constructed fortress that the locals seem unwilling to talk about beyond vague warnings to stay out. The outer walls slope inward, and the interior consists of a series of barren corridors and chambers, none of which seem to lead to whatever lies at the centre. Woermann is undaunted, but mystified.

"This is not a fortress — a soldier could walk up the outside wall," he muses upon entry. "Why are the small stones on the outside and the large stones here on the interior?" It's constructed backwards. This place was not constructed to keep something out."

The following morning, two of his soldiers are found torn to pieces, he scolds at the notion that villagers could be behind the deaths and becomes increasingly suspicious that something living deep in the structure's recesses is responsible. Regardless, word of the killings reaches Wehrmacht headquarters, and Woermann and his men are soon joined by blood-

thirsty Major Koenigfuer (Byrne) of the SS and a platoon of *Einsatzkommandos*, which proceeds to torture and slaughter locals in the vain hope of driving the partisans out into the open. When efforts prove futile, Koenigfuer enlists some unlikely aid: history professor Dr. Theodore Guza (McKellen) and his daughter Eva (Watson), a pair of Jews who are about to be shipped out to a death camp. While Woermann and Koenigfuer argue and snipe at each other, the bodies continue to pile up, and the sickly Guza has an encounter with Molossar (Michael Carlsen), the ominous entity imprisoned deep in the bowels of the citadel. Guza's health gradually begins to improve after he strikes a bargain to help the increasingly ludicrous-looking Molossar escape. But then Scott Glenn shows up with his magic flashlight or some goddamn thing to foil Molossar's nefarious world domination scheme and everything goes to shit and a bunch of lasers, fog and thundering synth chords.

The lack of even a bare-bones DVD release of *The Keep* is baffling. There's so very much to love here — albeit fatally marred by so many cringe-inducing choices by the filmmakers — that it still never fails to entrance me. In much the same fashion as *Prisco* (*RMN* 74) or the more recent *Black Death*, *The Keep*'s backdrop of despair, trauma and constant danger is the perfect venue for juxtapositions of greater and lesser evils. Now get the hell out of my basement before I get any more verklempf; it won't be pretty. 



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BLEED IN FOUR COLOURS

by PEDRO CABEZUELO

It's no secret that George A. Romero's 1968 *Night of the Living Dead* was partially a critique of American society and the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War. In 2006, comics writer Mark Kidwell, penciler Nat Jones and colourist Jay Fotos were inspired by this while creating their very own zombie tale. The result was '68, a one-issue comic set deep in the jungles of 1968 Vietnam that chronicles a small US platoon's fatal encounter with the living dead. The comic was a surprise hit and now, almost five years later, the trio is finally resurrecting the undead with a new, four-issue '68 series from Image Comics.

"[A follow-up] has been at the back of our minds for years, since the first book's release," affirms Kidwell. "We all knew it was eventually going to happen and that the series had incredible potential to go further, so I think it was just a matter of choosing the right time to fire it up again."

Luckily for zombie lovers, that time is now, as the creators cleared their busy schedules to reunite earlier this year. Kidwell says fans of the original can rest easy knowing that this is no quickie cash-in to satiate demand either.

"The first story arc opens just a few hours before the events shown in the one-shot," he explains. "You'll get a glimpse of

some familiar characters from that book and a [wider] view of their origin point, US firebase Anes. It's a broader story this time around, with a much larger cast and more shambling, cannibalistic undead ghouls than you can point an M-16 at."

While the original installment featured only a handful of soldiers, this return to '68 throws in a Chinese/American tunnel rat, a fanatical anti-war protester/actress with a film crew in tow, an undercover CIA agent, student activists, black militants, not cops and hippies.

According to Jones, the nearly five years that have passed since the original series was re-

leased gave the trio ample time to expand the project's scope and explore new directions. For starters, though the first story was limited to Vietnam, the new series is keen to show what else is happening around the world.

"We'll be sweeping the 'camera' from one side of the globe to the other, opening the lens to events unreplicable worldwide as the dead rise everywhere," says Kidwell. "You'll get snippets of factual events, personalities and political happenings as well as accurate depictions of period dress, weaponry and geography."

The three creators stress that the 1968 setting is not merely window dressing, or an attempt to exploit nostalgia, but rather an intrinsic part of the story itself.

"The 1960s and the Vietnam War were a turning point in world politics, music and culture that holds to this day," explains Jones.

"The loss of innocence and faith in government that came out of that period shook American society to its core. There are a huge number of iconic images, personalities and events that we have tapped into, and no other zombie storyline has utilized a setting so unique to explore the rising dead. [Kidwell's] concept for '68 is brilliant. I don't want to give too much away but this is definitely a zombie story like no other."

And like Romero before them, the creators of '68 refuse to pull punches when it comes to critique. However, the trio has its own philosophy about social commentary.

"What we try not to do is pick sides," admits Kidwell. "We're attempting to show you what's



'68: A US platoon encounters zombies during the Vietnam War

going on through an unbiased lens, showing you people with separate, realistic opinions and reactions. The beauty of that approach is that you get to flush most of it as the war takes a back seat to the new, impossible threat of the rising dead. People who had previously been venomous enemies now have to unify and stand against the opening of hell's gates if they want to survive."

Is there any worry that a contemporary audience may have difficulty relating to issues presented in a 1968 setting?

"You can't help but draw parallels between the Vietnam War and current events," says Jones. "Much like the world we live in today, the entire Vietnam era was very politically and socially charged. Our goal was to create a great zombie story woven out of one of the most pivotal periods in American history and I think we have accomplished that."

The first issue of the new '68 is on sale now.

Cenobite fans, rejoice! Clive Barker has returned to the world of *Hellraiser* (RMA#110) and, for the first time since 1987, has made it interesting again. Bored with his role in hell, Pinhead makes a deal with hell's higher power to become human, in the hope of attaining salvation. His part of the bargain is still unknown, but it's sure to spell bad news for Kirsty Cotton, heroine of the first two films who continues to wage her own crusade against hell's minions. Menno's art is stunning and his visions of the underworld fit perfectly with the look established in the movies, effortlessly combining beauty with the grotesque. While *Hellraiser* #1 is bound to confuse anybody not familiar with the mythos, long-time fans will be thrilled to share in Barker's vision once more.



The set-up to Night of the Living Dead: Death Valley is intriguing, but very little actually happens. It's 1969 and a group of teens has ventured out to the California desert to escape the zombie plague that's been terrorizing the Eastern Seaboard (as seen in *Avatar*'s regular *NoLD* series). Vacations rarely turn out the way you plan them, though, and undoubtedly our tanned beauties will soon be chased over sand dunes by hordes of the undead. There's also a Texas Chainsaw Massacre-like family that harvests the zombies for reasons yet to be revealed. The set-up to *Night of the Living Dead: Death Valley* is intriguing, but very little actually happens. Over half the comic is comprised of the characters frolicking in the sun and spouting wordy exposition, yet I still had a hard time telling the seven leads apart. Whether it's the uninspiring script or Verma's tendency to draw all characters alike, the end result is a drab read.

Marvel Zombies Supreme, as the title suggests, focuses on zombie clones of the Squadron Supreme — a Marvel counterpart to DC's Justice League — giving readers a refreshing break from the other recent installments, which dwelled a little too heavily on continuity. The second issue sees Hyperion (an ersatz Superman) set loose on an unsuspecting Kansas. A lot of fun is had at the expense of the Superman mythos as the super zombie terrorizes a farm-

ing community and its own batch of heroes, the (intentionally) ridiculous Harvesters. Meanwhile, the remaining members of the Zombie Squadron attack the military project that led to their creation. It's a fantastically bloody romp that requires no previous knowledge of the Zombieverse or even the Squadron itself. If you've never read an *MZ* comic, this is a great place to jump in.



Venom is back in his own monthly title, only this time the alien symbiote has attached himself to Flash Thompson, the high school jock who bullied Peter Parker in the early Spider-Man days. Venom/Flash is now in the employ of the US military and used in covert operations. The first issue of *Venom* sees the title character tangling with another Spidey villain, Jack O'Lantern, who has a tendency to scoop people's brains out of their heads. Jack was always a fairly lame Green Goblin wannabe, so it's nice to see him cut loose with his own gory storyline. Flash is perennially in danger of Venom taking full control, which gives this title a nice dramatic hook as he has to constantly be on guard from his own inner demons as well as a highly tempting outside force.



As a big fan of Michael Allred's art, I was thrilled to hear he'd be tackling the horror title *iZombie* with Chris Robinson, a writer perfectly suited to his quirky style. Gwen is a hip young zombie who must feast on brains once a month to avoid becoming a mindless aberration. Unfortunately, she must also temporarily contend with the memories of those she ingests. Her latest delicacy, it turns out, was murdered and Gwen vows to bring the victim's murderer to justice with the help of her friends, Ellie the ghost and Scott the were-terrier. Along the way she runs into vampires, monster hunters, mummies and possibly true love. *Dead to the World* collects the first five issues of the monthly and is a fantastic way for new readers to immerse themselves in Gwen's world.



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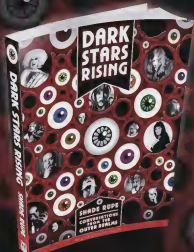
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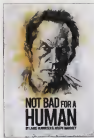


DARK STARS RISING: CONVERSATIONS FROM THE OUTER REALMS

Shade Rupe
Headpress

Feast your eyes, glut your soul and feed your face – the main course has arrived. Winter, film festival producer, cult film guru and occasional Rue Morgue contributor Shade Rupe's new book is a compilation of interviews he's conducted, since the mid-1980s, with a staggering array of transgressive artists. Filmmakers garner the bulk of the ink here and many of them rank among the most notorious in horror and its periphery: Richard Stanley, Jim Van Bebber, Dennis Paoli, Bill Lustig, Gaspar Noé, Buddy Giovinazzo and Alejandro Jodorowsky, among them. The proceedings are further fleshed out with magician-provocateur Teller, Divine, comedian and performance artist Brother Theodore (anyone else remember him?), musician Genesis P. Orridge, Crispin Glover, Udo "Captain Desturbo" Kier, recently departed cult film goddess Tura Satana and late great Gorezone honcho Chas. Balun.

Sure, most of the interview subjects found herein have been well-documented elsewhere, but seldom by anyone as articulate, thoughtful and jaw-droppingly authoritative as Rupe, whose admiration for these icons and oddballs is as evident as his innate understanding of transgressive culture in general. Although there are only a few colour photos included, the volume is handsomely (and heavily) illustrated with stills, candid pictures and poster art, some rarely seen before, and also contains a collection of selected reviews by Rupe. Of course, the more I read, the more I was inclined to compile my own list of folks who might well have graced these pages – Frank Henenrotter, John Lydon, Lloyd Kaufman, Mark Savage, perhaps various



members of Skinny Puppy or Rammstein – but that's just my inner malcontent rearing his pointy little head; it certainly didn't make *Dark Stars Rising* any less enjoyable.

This isn't the first book of its kind but it's easily the best in many years and, unlike so many of its ilk, it truly delivers the dark, sordid and occasionally downright absurd goods.

JOHN W. BOWEN

NOT BAD FOR A HUMAN: THE LIFE AND FILMS OF LANCE HENRIKSEN

Lance Henriksen and Joseph Maddrey
Bloody Pulp Books

Veteran actor Lance Henriksen's biography – co-written with *Nightmares in Red, White and Blue* writer/producer Joseph Maddrey – navigates the reader through the story of a feral youth turned artist, whose life's blood beats in the heart of every film he's touched. Watching the wild-eyed intensity and lyrical subtleties of Henriksen's performances may be a theatrical escape for us, but *Not Bad for a Human: The Life and Films of Lance Henriksen* makes it clear that the actor's long filmography is actually a collection of deeply personal moments captured on celluloid.

We are invited to travel with the young Henriksen during his lonely days on the grimy streets of New York City, and along the dusty highways heading west, where he ran from a tough life he loathed, before eventually making his greatest escape to the stage and screen. Henriksen worked with Maddrey for over a year to tell his story, and the book delves into every detail of his various projects, big and small, and even includes an intimate look at his life as a potter, husband, father and more.

While many fans will be drawn to the book for



its behind-the-scenes peek at Henriksen's most famous role – the android Bishop in James Cameron's *Aliens*, which the actor discusses at length – other surprises await within as well. Henriksen's undeniable talents as a storyteller are on full display here, and Maddrey serves as a perfect tour guide through the maverick actor's world. Together, they have crafted a compelling (and moving) tale about Henriksen's journey toward on screen success and self-discovery.

He's come a long way from the frightened boy who didn't learn how to read until his thirties. Now, an accomplished actor who is able to revel in the creative freedom of independent cinema, he has certainly learned a few lessons (which he's all too happy to share) along the way. *Not Bad for a Human*, indeed.

ALISON NASTASI

MONTÉ: KING OF ATOM-AGE MONSTER DECALS

Bill Selby
Last Gasp

Sometimes even seemingly minor players can have a big impact on culture. Half biography and half art book, *Monte: King of Atom-Age Monster Decals* tells the story of Don "Monte" Monteverde, a little-known illustrator who specialized in the gruesomely amusing "water slide" decals of the 1950s and '60s. Once purchased from hobby stores or from ads in the back of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, kids would soak these 1" decals in water and transfer Monté's leering lunchboxes, flaming skeletons and menacing ghosts to their bikes, lunchboxes and model kits.

Author and Monté buff Bill Selby has compiled this compelling look at the mysterious man behind the decals, said as "Originals by Monté." Profusely

THE GRIM READER

STRANGE MONSTERS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Michael Newton
Schiffer

The Pacific Northwest is best known for Bigfoot. However, as this book shows, there's a staggering variety of cryptozo creatures said to be haunting the vast forests, caves and seashores of the region. Newton packs the pages full of well-researched information and strange stories organized by creature types and locations. From Batsquatch to the Wishpoosh, this book goes beyond the simplistic monster guides to new, unexplored territories.



LYLE BLACKBURN

FLESH EATERS

Joe McKinney
Pinnacle

Police officer turned novelist Joe McKinney (*Dead City*, *Apocalypse of the Dead*) returns with *Flesh Eaters*, another high-tension romp. As Houston, Texas is pelted by a series of hurricanes, leaks from oil and other chemical containers mix with poorly stored corpses, creating the perfect breeding ground for a zombie virus. Endearing characters traverse their way through an intense, politically infused plot that will leave you hungry to consume (or re-digest) all of McKinney's back catalogue.



JESSA SOBCHUK

A ZOMBIE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

Dr. Worm Miller
Ulysses Press

Charging that zombies have been systematically removed from US history books, Dr. Worm Miller goes back 500 years to retrace the dragged footprint of "America's most invisible minority." From President Thomas Jefferson's secret zombie experiments to mass shambler slavery, this sweeping rewrite is endlessly clever but, at 226 pages, grows nearly as tedious as reading the dull textbooks it mocks.



TREVOR TUMINSKI

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Monte': King of the Atom-Age
Monster Decals: A look at the gory
water slide decals of the 1950s and '60s

illustrated with vintage snapshots and promotional material, Selby's book uncovers the sometimes tragic tale of the artist, who died in 1993, as revealed by his surviving friends and family. A compulsive doodler and cartoonist, Monte' was most comfortable piloting a drawing pencil or his trucked-out custom truck. After moonlighting as a spot illustrator for magazines and a car pinstriper, he quit his day job and became a full-time artist — at least until the decal fad ran out of gas.

But before that happened, he created dozens of gruesome lowbrow graphics, which are faithfully reproduced in the book's gallery section. A kind of nexus of monster movies, Mad magazine tattoo art and custom car culture, the decals are crude but undeniably charming; Frankenstein's monster, Gill-Man and lobster-like aliens appear alongside devils, killer apes and vampires. But Monte' didn't shy away from more squeamish material either; his work also features eyeballs stabbed with barbecue forks (captioned "pass the mustard"), decapitated heads and twisted faces with meat cleavers and daggers lodged in their skulls. A section devoted to the artist's rough illustrations is particularly interesting, showing how the decals were simple reductions of Monte's much more detailed schematics.

Monte' may not be as visible as some monster artists, but Selby makes a wonderful case for his importance in Monte' King of Atom-Age Monster Decals. And, with a replica pack of decals tucked in the back, you can't help but give in to the blood-spattered, flame-scorched fun that made Monte' such an original.

PAUL CORUPE

CHILLING TALES: EVIL DID I DWELL; LEWD I DID LIVE

Michael Kelly, ed.
Edge

In his introductory essay, editor Michael Kelly, makes a point of mentioning just how few Canadian genre anthologies have been published. While not entirely surprising given our country's love/hate relationship with promoting homegrown horror talent (see *Library of the Damned*, *RMRT 10*), it does seem a real shame given how exemplary the work is in those collections that have seen the light of day (namely *Tesseract* 1.3, *Evolve*, *Vampire Stories of the New Undead* and *In the Dark: Stories From the Supernatural*).

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AWARD-WINNING EDITOR
ELLEN DATLOW
SHARES SOME INSIGHT INTO THE BUSINESS OF
COMPILING A TRULY SPINE-CHILLING COLLECTION.

MADAME GRIM

by MONICA S. KUEBLER

IF SHORT HORROR TALES WERE MONSTROUS ORPHANS, ELLEN DATLOW WOULD BE THE ONE WHO HOUSES AND GROOMS THEM IN PREPARATION TO SEND THEM OFF INTO THE WORLD TO MENACE FICTION FANS.

"Everyone thinks they can be an editor, but I think most people have no idea what being an editor means," says Datlow, who curates and edits anthologies, and shops them to publishers. "It means being true to your taste, being willing to make a decision—I don't like this story. I'm not going to publish it or, I like this story and I am going to publish it and I don't care who the name is or if it's a person I've never heard of. ... My job is to help the writers create the story they've been trying to write."

Datlow has been tracking down tales for 30 years now. She's won more than 20 editing awards, spanning three genres—horror, science fiction and fantasy—and, in March, the Horror Writers Association named her one of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award recipients.

Her love of horror fiction began in childhood with the works of Poe, Oscar Wilde and Nathaniel Hawthorne. As she grew up, her literary diet expanded to include genre-bending authors such as Harlan Ellison, eventually leading her to a long-term position as Fiction Editor at sci-fi magazine *Omni*, which also gave her the impetus to edit horror (as editing sci-fi anthologies could be seen as a conflict of interest). In the late '80s, she began co-editing the annual *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* collections, and many original-themed anthologies followed, including *Twists of the Teller: An Anthology of Cat Horror* (1996), *The Dark: New Ghost Stories* (2003) and *Supernatural Noir* (out from Dark Horse in June)—three Datlow counts among her favorites.

"Never wanted to write any kind of fiction. Editing has always been my calling," she notes of why she doesn't write herself.

Of course, one doesn't spend decades immersed in others' fiction without forming some strong opinions about what makes for a great story.

"[A horror story] got to have characterization, plotting, atmosphere, voice," explains Datlow. "Maybe voice more than anything else will impress me. It's the stories where I hear the voice of the character and that character is really different from other characters and really individualistic, that's what gets me."

Yet, despite her reputation and track record, publishers don't necessarily seek out her expertise as a freelance editor-for-hire.

"I'm still pitching," admits Datlow, who compiles her themed anthologies by soliciting authors she thinks are suited to the subject matter. "[Publisher] Solaris came after me about Poe [2009], but most are [themes] I come up with. There are people who ask me to do anthologies and it turns out they're small press and they just can't pay me enough to make it worth my while. I need to make a living out of it and I need to pay my authors a certain amount of money."

Keeping an eye on genre trends can also help. Datlow's latest release is *Teeth* (co-edited by Tim Winkling, and out now from HarperCollins), a vampire anthology of the "non-sparkly" variety. It's her first excursion into young adult horror, though she's edited other teen collections in the past. While not particularly gory, Datlow aspired to make the book disturbing after noticing how few modern YA horror anthologies were actually scary.

"Some of the kids who are reading it are saying, 'Oh my god, there is something scary in here. I don't know how I feel about it.' What is so new about scary vampires?" wonders Datlow. "They should be scary, but *Twilight* has made them non-scary. Our stories are more about the nasty effects of being a vampire, the things you lose when you've become [one]. ... There are things you can't do anymore when you are a vampire, there are evil people who are vampires who do things even though they promise [not to], they are lying and they will kill you and your family."

Despite seeing horror fiction evolve over the past few decades, Datlow admits she's no good at predictions, but she does have a few wishes: "I'd like to say that zombies will die a deadly death forever, but I think it's going to be more of the same. The problem with literary horror versus movie horror is that movie horror has taken over the public perception and that's what the public sees: graphic, grisly, icky stuff. They don't see subtly in most horror movies and I think that has been damaging to the reputation of horror fiction. I hope that will change." ☐



LIBRARY OF THE DAMNED

BYRON SMITH INTERVIEWS

Massive upheaval continues in horror publishing. Merch, new authors and literary organizations alike call for a massive industry boycott of once major mass-market publisher Leisure/Dorchester for failure to pay its talent and other contract infractions (a potential class action lawsuit is also being threatened). As a result, established horror writers are now embracing the formerly taboo act of self-publishing in order to get their work into the hands of readers (and make some bucks). I recently spoke to Bryan Smith, author of *Soulbaker* and *House of Blood*, about why he decided to leap into this largely uncharted territory.

As a professional author, what inspired you to release *Darkened* as a self-published eBook?

Primarily because I couldn't help noticing the massive success [thriller author] J.A. Konrath was enjoying self-publishing an array of his own titles. He was one of the first authors with a significant degree of mainstream success to walk away from a lucrative mass-market contract

and have a go at doing it on his own. He frequently blogs about his self-publishing experiences, going into great detail about the nuts and bolts of the process and providing a lot of hard data.

What do you feel is ultimately behind this author-driven shift? There are a number of factors. [Konrath] is hardly the only suc-

cess story. Also, I'm sure I'm far from the only mass-market veteran sorely tempted by the allure of self-publishing after enduring a lot of frustrating and less-than-profitable years with traditional publishers. There's a sense of liberation in doing it on your own. In the case of my books with Dorchester, the per copy royalty was a piddling four percent. Ridiculous and insulting, but many of us publishing with them felt we had little choice but to accept it.

Do you feel that the stigma behind self-publishing is changing as a result?

It has certainly changed in some ways, but it has not gone away entirely. When I was a young writer, it was the last thing I ever wanted to do. The very notion filled me with intense loathing. In the many frustration-filled years prior to selling my first novel to Dorchester, I always said I'd either be published the right way or not at all. ... The abruptly sharp rise in the popularity of e-readers took me by surprise. I was very much a traditionalist. But you can only close your eyes against progress for so long before you go blind. Some among the old guard will continue to cling to the old prejudices regarding self-publishing, but their numbers will continue to dwindle until they are almost gone.

MONICA S. KUEBLER

While being Canadian isn't exactly a theme, a distinct mood emerges from the fiction in *Chilling Tales* as something tangibly different yet cohesive bubbles up through its pages, making for a tone and texture that is decidedly Canuck in flavour. One common thread is the recurring feeling of isolation, which abounds in stories that hint at unfathomable evils, vast and eternal damnation, emptiness and, above all, hopelessness. Kelly argues in his foreword that these themes are especially prevalent in Canadian literature, whether it be due to our climate and geography or our history and traditions. The collection's protagonists and anti-heroes often spiral off the edge of sanity, as in Nancy Kilpatrick's "Sympathy for the Devil," which examines a man in denial about his drinking and driving crimes, even as he himself becomes a prisoner of his painful injuries. Richard Gavin's twisted and mysterious "King Him," about a dysfunctional sibling relationship, also examines the disturbing descent into mental illness and is as psychologically devastating as it is viscerally graphic.

Another commonality here is that these stories do not shy away from borrowing from other genres, utilizing aspects of sci-fi (Suzanne Church's harrowing love story "The Needle's Eye"), dark and urban fantasy (Sandra Kastun's "Foxford" is a perfect, poetic example of this fusion), and more traditional crime fiction, such as Ian Rogers' "My Body," about a detective, who uses an unusual witness to help him solve a crime.

Kelly's hope is to have this collection become an annual tradition, and judging by the rate at which the Canadian genre scene is picking up interest and momentum right now, there should be no shortage of imaginative and fantastic literature to fill future volumes.

JESSA SOBIECZUK

QUIVER

Holly Luhnig
Harper Collins

Execution is everything. Don't believe me? Allow me to present Holly Luhnig's debut novel *Quiver* as evidence. The concept of this book is undoubtedly compelling: an interned psychotherapist, Danica, discovers that her patient, an Elizabeth Bathory-obsessed murderer, may have been coerced or even controlled by a powerful cult-like cabal with clandestine plans. Meanwhile, her friend Maria, who is also fascinated by the historical serial killer, unearths the Countess' personal diaries and begins to translate them for future publication. Of course, both plot points are intertwined, and this thriller seeks to entertain readers by slowly unravelling the how and why of it all. But apart from the gory torture sequences culled from Bathory's diary and the book's last 30 pages, very little of *Quiver* is entertaining or thrilling.

So how did Luhnig manage to squander this otherwise exciting premise? With the characters. When writing a book in the first person, the author is essentially placing the reader in the shoes of the protagonist, and there is very little to like (or relate to) in Danica. She's unhappy with her work and field of study but refuses to try to change it, her artist boyfriend is growing ever more aloof but she won't address it, and her mysterious friend Maria routinely manipulates her, but she keeps coming back for more (apparently because she's fascinated with the diaries). She may in fact be the biggest literary wallflower/pushover ever. By the time she finally grows a spine in the book's second last chapter, you likely won't care anymore.

Luhnig, it seems, was trying to draw parallels between Bathory and Maria's controlling natures, while showcasing Danica's transition from a timid, by-the-rules therapist to someone darker and more daring (who could be capable of committing acts of evil, but the character shift starts too late and, as a result, feels more tacked on than genuine).

The cruel cabal, the gruesome diaries and the committed killer are all relegated to being little more than cool but ultimately wasted plot devices in a character-driven story absolutely devoid of interesting characters. Too much taking (in coffee shops, nightclubs, art galleries, etc.) and too little action make this fictional excursion into Bathory's legacy of torture and brutality a disappointing bore.

MONICA S. KUEBLER




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TRAVELOGUE OF TERROR

LYNDHURST ESTATE TARRYTOWN, NEW YORK
BY MICHAEL DEMARSHO



Driving up to the 67-acre Lyndhurst estate in Tarrytown, New York, the beautiful grounds make it easy to forget that Manhattan lies only 24 miles away. However, the pastoral setting and classic buildings compete in my mind with visions of ghosts, vampires and witches, because I recognize the place from exterior shots in the supernatural soap opera *Dark Shadows* (1966-1971), and the house's role as the fictional Collinwood Mansion in related films, *House of Dark Shadows* (1970) and *Night of Dark Shadows* (1971).

The lush, sprawling estate's proximity to the TV series' Manhattan studios allowed cast and crew to travel easily to the location, which has also been proclaimed a National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) site. Displaying some of the finest late 19th-century/early 20th-century architecture and décor in the United States, the house required little in the way of set design to evoke the show's Gothic atmosphere.

Although there's no official mention of the supernatural saga on the Lyndhurst website or anywhere on the estate itself, devout *Dark Shadows* fans will undoubtedly recognize the surroundings (Some Disney fans may also remember it as the backdrop for the castles of both *Court Dracula* and *Winnie the Witch* in the 1979 TV movie *The Halloweentown Treats*; Almost Weren't a.k.a. *The Night Dracula Saved the World*).

After purchasing passes in the gift shop, our group gathers to view a DVD summarizing Lyndhurst's history. We learn about the estate's construction as a post-colonial country villa designed by architect Alexander Jackson Davis in 1838 for New York City mayor William Paulding, Davis' major 1864 renovation for merchant and railroad spring patent holder George Merritt; and its ownership beginning in 1880 by railroad tycoon and robber baron Jay Gould, Gould, who suf-

fered from tuberculosis, used Lyndhurst as a retreat until his death, when it was owned successively by his two daughters Helen and Anna. The latter maintained the property until her 1961 passing, when it was willed to the NTHP.

The tour begins and our guide ushers us upstairs to Lyndhurst's entrance hall, which has a classic look with walls featuring marble finish and a white marble and blue Minton tile floor. This room appears in an early scene of *House of Dark Shadows*, when Collinwood housekeeper Mrs. Johnson (Barbara Cason) opens the door to reveal vampire Barnabas Collins (Jonathan Frid). The domestic drops her silver tea set in shock (which apparently clipped the floor, according to *Dark Shadows* expert Jim Pierson) because Barnabas resembles a supposedly dead ancestor.

We move on to Lyndhurst's drawing room. Originally designed for women to retire to when men discussed business, it features large windows, crystal chandeliers and assorted furniture and art. In *House of Dark Shadows*, this is where Doctor Julia Hoffman (Grayson Hall) realizes Barnabas is a vampire, as she notes that he casts no reflection in her compact mirror.

Our guide then steers us through Lyndhurst's reception room, a spacious and elegant area with an extravagantly painted ceiling that displays the hours of the day like an Italian fresco. It also served as the site of the costume party that matched Elizabeth Collins Stoddard (Joan Bennett) and her brother Roger Collins (Louis Edmonds) throw to welcome Barnabas in *House of Dark Shadows*.

Next, our guide directs us into the

adjoining library, which, in true Gothic fashion, contains multiple glass paneled and floating bookshelves crammed with period volumes. Various characters in both *Dark Shadows* movies use the library, but perhaps the most famous scene shot here was the one from *House of Dark Shadows* in which Barnabas convinces heroine Maggie Evans (Kathryn Leigh Scott) not to leave Collinwood.

After the library, our guide shows us Gould's office and Lyndhurst's cabinet room before taking us to the massive oak dining room. In *House of Dark Shadows*, this space hosts the sequence in which David Collins (David Henesy) interrupts a sombre family dinner to announce that he has seen one of Barnabas' victims, Carolyn Stoddard (Nancy Barrett), alive in the Collinwood pool house. Only Professor Timothy Stokes (Thayer David) believes him, however.

We then move upstairs to Lyndhurst's art gallery, a skylit space featuring a large stained glass window, a choir loft and Gould's European art collection. Barnabas' portrait hangs here in *House of Dark Shadows*—making it an iconic location for fans. The gallery's window also provides a great view of the tree where witch Angelique Collins (Lara Parker) is said to have been hanged centuries earlier in *Night of Dark Shadows*.

More memories arise when we enter the spacious east bedroom. This ornate room is dominated by a sturdy oak bed decorated with carved leaves and fruit, and features a large window topped with stained glass. I realize that this space served as Duerrin and Tracy Collins' (David Selby and Kate Jackson) bedroom in *Night of Dark Shadows*, and is also the room where a mesmerized Maggie gets bound to a bed with garlic tied to it in order to repel Barnabas, who still manages to kidnap her, in *House of Dark Shadows*.



Next, our guide leads us down the hall to explore Lyndhurst's other rooms – Helen Gould's office, the original bathroom and additional bedrooms – before heading back to the basement to see the kitchen, thus concluding the tour. Beyond this, there are other buildings on the Lyndhurst estate that have been featured in the *Dark Shadows* series and movies, but they're not currently open to the public. Among them are the administrative offices, which served as the Collinwood cottage in *Night of Dark Shadows*; the greenhouse that has its roof shattered by Angelique during an attack on Alex Jenkins (John Karlen) in *Night of Dark Shadows*; the pool house, a dirty and decrepit structure that appears in both films; Rose Cottage, a playhouse that lent its name to the home of various Collins ancestors in the TV series; the stables, which represent the Collinwood garage; and, of course, the iconic tower that houses Angelique's ghost in *Night of Dark Shadows*.

The experience of visiting Lyndhurst is like stepping into the world of *Dark Shadows* for dedicated fans. The estate's buildings and grounds look much the same as they did in the series and films, and visitors may even find a *Dark Shadows*-lovin' tour guide who will share his or her own knowledge. In general, there is no in-depth acknowledgement of *Dark Shadows* at Lyndhurst, though, and many visitors seem more interested in the history and architecture of the place. As a result, newer fans may find it more difficult than hardcore devotees to relate the estate to the show's characters and plots. However, even horror fans unfamiliar with Collinwood will appreciate the eerie Gothic atmosphere that Lyndhurst emanates.

Lyndhurst offers guided tours of the mansion (approximately 45 minutes to an hour in length), as well as cellphone audio tours of the mansion and grounds (45 minutes to three hours in duration) with paid admission. Individual admission costs \$12 US for adults, \$11 US for seniors and \$6 US for children between the ages of six and sixteen, if accompanied by a paying adult. Free admission is available for Friends of Lyndhurst and NTHP members, as well as for children under six if accompanied by a paying adult. General group tours for ten or more people are also available. Hours of operation vary depending on the time of year, so call (914) 631-4481, email Lyndhurst@nthp.org or visit the official website, lyndhurst.org, for up-to-date information and directions.



Shady Acres: (clockwise from top) Pump image from 1970's *House of Dark Shadows*; Lyndhurst's blood-red parlor; the drawing room; Rose Cottage on the estate's grounds; and (opposite) the Lyndhurst mansion.

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THE GORE-MET

WENN: GORE-MET GETS SOME GREEN WITH HIS RED

In filmmaking, it isn't the budget, or even the story, that makes for a successful film; it's the characters that inhabit it. Nothing else works if the audience doesn't care about what happens to the people within the movie. Too often this is overlooked, but not in the stoner/zombie comedy *Bong of the Dead*, a micro-masterpiece with a ton of heart... and intestines, brains, and severed limbs!

"When I set out to write the film I always knew I wanted to do a zombie film that had more to it than just characters avoiding getting eaten while going on a mass killing spree in the name of survival, and good gore," explains writer/director/producer/cinematographer/editor/effects artist/composer Thomas Newman.

The plot of *BoD* sees potheads Edwin (Mark Wynn) and Tommy (Jy Harris) while away their post-zombie outbreak days getting high in their small apartment. Edwin, ever the inventive horticulturalist, discovers that using dried zombie brains as fertilizer makes for mad weed. Unfortunately, the government has cleared all the zombies from the area, so they take a road trip to the Danger Zone in search of rotten grey matter. On the way, they are captured by a sentient zombie, Alex (Barry Nerling), who lords over a hilariously unruly undead army and dreams of world domination. They narrowly escape, but their car breaks down near a remote farm. The sole survivor of the family that once lived there, Leah (Simone Bailey), a resourceful babe who hides her vulnerability beneath a gruff exterior, begrudgingly agrees to fix their ride. When she discovers the engine is seized, she decides to join them on their journey, putting together a tricked-out 4x4 zombie-killing machine. Meanwhile, Alex and his flesh-eating horde come looking for brains of their own.

In many ways, this film is reminiscent of Hong Kong horror-comedy *Bio Zombie* (RMA25). When introduced, the main characters aren't particularly likable, but as they're fleshed out, you can't help but be drawn to their antics and foibles. The cast sells this superiority.



"Getting to work as a one-man EPK [electronic press kit] Producer on local film sets allowed me the opportunity to get close to actors, stand-ins, stunt people, etc.," recalls Newman. "I was on the set of a film called *Star Helsing* when I first met Simone Bailey. Through her I was able to get Barry Nerling, Jy Harris and Mark Wynn, as well as a couple of other people. ...The chemistry between all the actors involved was perfectly fitting for the screen."

Bong of the Dead features a mix of practical and computer-generated carnage. The copious splatter and fantastic makeup effects, courtesy of Mike Fields, are augmented, rather than replaced, by digital trickery. Some 900 gallons of fake blood were blasted through firehoses during the climactic battle scene, which features a truck with three lawnmowers mounted on the front for some serious damage.

"When I set out, I had no idea that I would eventually end up composing over 365 shots by myself," says Newman. "I had a few ideas where I wanted to use CG enhancement, but as I started to learn the process by doing online tutorials I began to see endless possibilities. I decided to go through the movie and enhance all the things I would've

loved to have done if I'd had a real budget and a crew."

Of course, there has been fan backlash over the use of computer effects in genre films, but it's a tool that Newman has used well, and he is philosophical about its application.

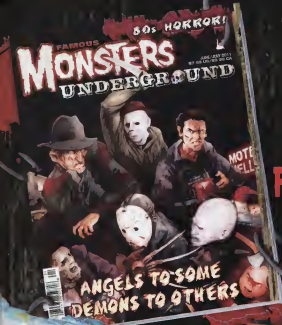
"When it comes to CGI in films, I am not a huge fan when the main creature or villain suddenly becomes animated to the point that it looks like CG," he says. "That kills the intensity. However, I am a bit of a fan when it's used to enhance a scene and you don't even know it's there, as well as when an entire world is created in CG, such as in films like *300* or *Sin City*. I love the whole graphic novel look and I'm pretty sure I want to do a few films in that style."

Bong of the Dead has cult hit smeared all over it, and demands attention from fans of the aforementioned *Bio Zombie* and another heartwarmer praised on this page, *Plaga Zombie: Zona Mutante* (RMA53).

"I want the fans to be entertained, but I also want them to walk away knowing that the film was done without any studio support and that it all came together in one guy's basement," says Newman. "That's really important for me."

At press time, Newman was still working on securing distribution, check bongofthedead.com for updates.





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By
JOE KLEIN



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REVIEWS BY EVAN DAVIES, MARK B. HASAN, AARON VON LUDEN, GEORGE PINCKO AND TREVOR TURNER



MEGA SHARK VS. GIANT OCTOPUS: THE MONSTER FILM MUSIC OF CHRIS RIDENHOUR

Chris Ridenhour
MovieScore Media

Chris Ridenhour took note of the tricks and techniques of B-movie score veterans, and consequently gives each of his monster scores strong themes and dynamic action cues, all written with near-complete seriousness. Although his instrumental palettes are largely restricted to orchestral emulations here, the writing is clever and really fun. Each nine-toon-minute suite reveals a familiarity with major and minor monster movie maestros, and any overt filmic references are mini-homages rather than blatant derivations. "Mega Shark" is a great blend of wry yet delicately performed classical pieces and compelling original themes, whereas "Hunting of Winchester House" — the best of the four suites — evokes a vintage Ken Russell-style shocker by using warped, moaning strings and low-range woodwinds that drizzle across the soundscape. "Sherlock Holmes" offers regal heroism with chorals, while coarse electric and orchestral elements dominate the humbly titled "Mega Piranha." This monstrous 80-minute treat is worth snipping up separately, or as part of the recently released Chris Ridenhour three-CD set. **MRH ★★★★★**



DRIVE ANGRY

Michael Wandmacher
Lakeshore Records

Following *My Bloody Valentine* and *Pi-*

ranha 3D, this is Michael Wandmacher's third score for a 3-D flick. His music for *Drive Angry* is a great mélange of electrified blues guitar and pounding drums — for those delicious scenes when Nicolas Cage is in a state of rage and frenzy, manning a car on mechanical steroids down steamy asphalt to halt a blood sacrifice. But there are a number of subtleties that inject the work with a surprising amount of diversity, too. Nuances are key to the score's success, and the fuzz guitar and grungy sustained chords nicely capture the feel of a '70s shocker. Violence on screen is heightened by screeching dissonance, and the main theme is more about a state of angst than a character piece — which is just fine, because Wandmacher's robust writing style guarantees this bass-tinted, metal-flangin' furfest will recreate a bit of Cage-rage when the volume is cranked high in your ride. **MRH ★★★★★**



COLD BLUE REBELS

Blood, Guts N' Rock & Roll
Horror Hox

True to their name, Cold Blue Rebels look like undernourished characters from an S.E. Hinton novel but have a sleazy, horror cheese vibe that lies somewhere between John Waters and *Night of the Creeps*. Fronted by Mickey Finn, formerly of legendary hard rockers Jetboy, Cold Blue Rebels offers a dozen Halloween party tunes here, including the Stray Cats-esque necrophilia love track "Cold, Blue & Beautiful," an ode to a decomposing burlesque dancer ("Worm Hole Hooker") and "Zombie Love," one of those doo-wop songs that's on virtually every modern horror punk album. The California quartet never establishes a distinctive style, but this is less of a psychobilly album than a collection of songs for greaser monster kids. It may just be a horror gimmick but these dudes can play, and the

songwriting prowess, air-tight production and energy of the performances make it as much fun as the title suggests. Perfect for anyone who really wishes every day was Halloween. **AVL ★★★★★**



BLITZKID

Apparitional
People Like You

While the members of West Virginia's Blitzkid classify themselves as "horror punk," there's little about *Apparitional* that could be considered horrific, at least in a complimentary sense. While most well-regarded horror punk acts — from Misfits and Balzac to The Other — possess a modicum of darkness in their songwriting, Blitzkid is comparatively pop-oriented, powerless and ineffectual — a sub-APF copy likely geared toward packaged teenybopper rebellion. Much of the blame should rest with guitarist Nathan Bone, whose punk rock chops — though melodically admirable on "The Awakening" — sound more suitable for a Pennywise cover band. Elsewhere, vocalist/bassist Goolsby lets loose with his best Glenn Danzig/Davey Havok im-

provement, but ends up sounding more like Bad Religion's Greg Gaffin with a sinus infection. Add to this drummer Ricko Moris' relentlessly upbeat two-step drum performance and what's left is a capable pop/punk trio with very little in the way of "horror business." **GP ★★**



DEATH VALLEY DOOM

In Full Bloom
Mines HEAD Records

Founded upon the idea of "a school being overtaken by all the dark, freak kids," the San Francisco quartet bears an uncanny similarity to its North Cal brethren, Deftones. It's no surprise, as singer/guitarist Reyka Osburn even co-wrote a song with the screaming giants once, but the fact that he so convincingly apes Deftones' throat-misocost Chino Moreno over top of down-tuned guitar lines plucked straight from Soundgarden string-bender Kim Thayil's wizard-like beard doesn't earn this otherwise well-crafted sophomore album marks for originality. The band's bio describes DVH as "dance rock" and

NOW PLAYING ON

HOUSE OF USHER

Las Baxter
Intrada

Las Baxter knew *House of Usher* offered him a superb chance to flex his composing muscles and create striking music for a film in which the horror wasn't tied to an onscreen monster. Running 62 minutes, the result is a study in contrasts: While the tragic main theme for the desecrating family is written in Baxter's patented laudious, melodic style, the score's dramatic meat is in the gripping, almost free-form theme derivations. The composer takes his time (the finale runs just under fourteen minutes) creating eerie evocations of dank basements and wailed-up secrets via combinations of bass flutes, haunting voices and rumbling low tones. Beautiful and elegant, it's hard to believe Baxter's career high point is available on CD only because the music-only cut track used for the final soundtrack mix still survives. Intrada's tech team managed to even out the volume dips to create a balanced mono recording that makes this limited release worth every bloody penny. **MRH ★★★★★**



the BLOOD SPATTERED GUIDE

SCREAMIN' FOR A THEME

"Scream for me!"
— BRUCE DICKINSON

Don't have sex. Don't drink or do drugs. Don't ever say, "I'll be right back." We know there are rules to survival in a horror film. And we know this long before Wes Craven's *Scream* made them explicit for the masses in 1996. But something that the *Scream* franchise has also reminded us is that there are rules to horror film soundtracks, too.

With the arrival of *Scream 4* last month came another "Official Motion Picture Soundtrack" compilation, filled with tracks taken from the film and some samples of the score. Sadly, it's not very scary. You could easily imagine bopping to "Something to Die For" by Swedish new wavers The Sounds at a summer BBQ, while "Run for Your Life" by London's 6 Day Riot is pure pop.

The only rule to mainstream horror soundtracks: make it trendy. The indie rock sound is what the target demographic for the film is currently hip to, so that's what we'll give 'em. It's why, for years, horror film soundtracks were almost exclusively comprised of Hot Topic-type industrial rock acts. And why 1997's *Scream 2* was mostly made up of cuts from alternative bands such as Everclear and Tonic, while 2000's *Scream 3* "boosted" contributions from Creed and Static-X.

Unlike score CDs, a music library staple for horror film fans, it's hard to imagine any demographic actually buying or hiding on to these collections of destined-for-delete-bin tunes. What *Scream* needs is an original, memorable theme song, such as "Pet Sematary" by the Ramones, "He's Back (The Man Behind the Mask)" by Alice Cooper or Burt Bacharach's *Aloft* theme. Still, even the "Maniac Cop Rap." Would it be so hard to call up the most obvious choice for a *Scream* theme, rapper Ghostface Killah?

The closest the series has come to a slasher-worthy theme is "Red Right Hand" by Nick Cave. Originating on his 1994 album *Let Love In*, the ominous, seething number is used in the first three *Scream* films. *Scream 2* featured a remix by DJ Spooky (trendily), but the best version, with extended lyrics telling listeners to "scream once, scream twice, now scream again," wasn't even put on the soundtrack for *Scream 3*. (It can be found on the Cave box set *B-Sides and Rarities*.)

So instead of shelling out for *Scream 4*'s OST, you may wish to turn your attention to the score by Marco Beltrami. The American composer who cut his teeth on the series before going on to genre fare such as *Resident Evil*, *Hellboy*, and the Oscar-nominated *3:10 to Yuma*. He knows the sound of Sidney, Ghostface and Woodsboro best.

LISSA LABOUCHE



"Black Friday" and "Multiply" (about being overcome by a vampire, alien or zombie) — are standard rock radio fare with sing-along choruses fit for a Foo Fighters B-sides collection. If only the band applied itself to original songwriting assignments as well as it does to a cover of Killing Joke's "The Wait" and a pummeling version of Katy Perry's "I Kissed a Girl," which sounds like the pop star's head being caved in, they'd surely finish at the top of the class.

TT 3.5/5



THE VOODOO

The Rock and Roll Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies

BEATLEBEATS REVISITED

The gruesome twosome of Ned Nigh (drums) and Eerie Powers (vocals, guitar) seems to have perfected an instantly familiar style of no-frills, bluesy horror rock during the fifteen years that the Long Beach, California, musicians have reportedly been hanging out in haunted garages. Trouble is, The Voodoo have defined what they (and so many others) do so well that they often play to expectations, furnishing each spooky serenade with the customary accoutrements: creepy keys, theremin, vocals treated with varying levels of echo and/or distortion, and simple White Stripes-style drum beats. Even at just shy of a half-hour, these ten odes to tribal worship, animal skins and blood-laced poisons grow monotonous, aside from spirited offerings such as "Zombie Baby," "In Like Flint" and "Shrunken Head." While these two witch doctors are certainly dedicated to their craft, they're gonna need to shake up their spellbook before they make a believer outta me. TT 3.5



SIGN OF THE JACKAL

The Beyond

HEAVY ARTILLERY

Eerking more of a Teutonic aura than

the band's Italian heritage might imply, Sign of the Jackal packs a spaghetti-horror punch on its second EP, *The Beyond*. Titled after Lucio Fulci's surreal 1981 film, this all-the-brief five-song collection takes conceptual inspiration for its infectious, electric grooves from such cult movie fare as Lamberto Bava's *Demons* and Luigi Cozzi's bizarre *Paganus Horror*, which should please both traditional metal fans and Italian splatter aficionados alike. The quintet comes across as Italy's answer to classic Warlock, primarily due to chismatic lead vocalist Laura Collier Melodic and powerful, her voice is the perfect musical foil for aermen Roberto Condini and Mr. Pinkie, who both stired as prime NWOBHM (New Wave of British Heavy Metal) fashion. Forget the achingly average, retro-ironic junk currently making the rounds, Sign of the Jackal is indeed — as proclaimed by barn-burning opening track "Hellhounds" — a "heavy metal revolution" deserving of serious investigation.

GP 3.5/5



PENTAGRAM

Last Rites

METAL BLADE

Will Pentagram ever again match the imitable doom-draped atmospherics of its earlier work? It's the bone of any band that has, by most accounts, pecked decades earlier. Founder Bobby Liebling knows that his classic sound is the draw, which is why he continues to recycle decades-old, previously unreleased tunes alongside new material on this seventh disc. The result is, unsurprisingly, uneven. New or used, what's missing here is the oppressive, dirty gloom that hangs over Pentagram's most celebrated music. Overly polished songs such as "Treat Me Right" and "B" are indistinguishable from contemporary riff-worshipping metal, while "American Dream" is either laughably earnest patriotism or too subtly ironic. Anything but diabolical. Better are "Nothing Left," with its overpowering, nasty groove, and "Everything's Turning to Night" — the closest *Last Rites* comes to anything "classic" in sound. In its fourth decade of existence, Pentagram's contribution to metal is obvious, but this record does little to affirm it. ED 3.5

RM CRYPTOZOOLOGY EXPERT LYLE BLACKBURN CONFIRMS
THE EXISTENCE OF AN EXTREMELY RARE MUSICAL BEAST.

THE LEGEND OF

BIGFOOT METAL

by LYLE BLACKBURN
ILLUSTRATION BY JUSTIN OSBORN



I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT IT. ITS EXISTENCE. A monstrous band that roams the fringes of musical mayhem, fusing together bone-crushing death metal with visions of bloodthirsty ape-men and legendary gypsies. But it wasn't until recently that I was able to capture tangible proof. The band is Troglodyte and its third and newest release, *Welcome to Boggy Creek* (available mid-May), successfully combines a highly evolved form of metal with tales of Bigfoot, skunk apes and yells.

The band's website defines the Mason-based quartet as "neandercore," although essentially it is of the species *Metallum morian* (i.e. death metal), fitting into the same genus as bands such as Carcass, Obituary and Cannibal Corpse. However, when it comes to the genre's typical themes, Troglodyte trends where very few others, if any, have gone before. "Bigfoot metal" may sound strange, but after some investigation into the realm of Troglodyte it makes perfect sense. On one hand you have crushing guitars, growling vocals and hard-hitting beats, while on the other you have lyrics about huge, hairy beasts with glowing red eyes and bad attitudes. Put the two together and the result is something akin to angry giants churning out face-slapping metal.

"I've always been into stories of Bigfoot," affirms Jeff Sisson, "vocal attack" and driving force behind Troglodyte. "When I was a kid I watched [TV shows like *In Search of...* or [the movie] *The Mysterious Monsters* and it was always mind-blowing to me."

Given the nature of guttural vocals and screaming guitars, the connection might not be apparent at first listen, but once you get a hold of some physical evidence, like, say, a CD, it becomes quite clear. Songs such as "Bring Me the Head of Bigfoot," "Broken and Eaten," "Mummified Yeti Hand" and "Symphonies of Sasquatch" prove that it's not mere monkey business here, but rather a form of monolithic, man-ape violence set to furious blast beats, tight riffs and pounding choruses. There's not a lot of excess frills, just straightforward tunes that leave big footprints in their wake. ("We work hard to make music that's worthy of the death metal genre," Sisson assures.)

Naturally, I wonder how he came up with the band's concept.

"I was hanging out with my friend Trent Haaga [actor/writer/producer, *Terror Firm*]. We watched an old movie called *Night of the Demon*, which is this really painful horror film about a Bigfoot creature," Sisson explains. "Afterwards, I looked at Trent and said, 'What if I did a band based on Bigfoot?' The idea was almost so stupid I thought it might actually work!"

For a name, Sisson looked to another favourite film, *The Pit*, in which a boy discovers a wretched hole full of man-eating creatures called "Troggs," short for troglodytes (primitive cave-dwelling humans).

Though the band's previous two albums were

recorded in a basement, a growing fan base and label interest led the furry foursome—which also includes drummer Chris Wilson, guitarist Jack Riedel and bassist Ben-Von Schielebusch—to an actual studio and a collaboration with a producer (Adam Mitchell) for the first time. Both decisions helped acoustuate Troglodyte's brutal sound.

"We wanted to work with someone who wasn't necessarily engrained in death metal because we wanted a fresh perspective," Sisson says. "[Mitchell] brought a lot to the table and I think it worked out really well."

Furthering the band's mythology are the group's startling visuals, including *Welcome to Boggy Creek*'s artwork—created by Slicer Design's Justin Osborn, whose work also graces Fright Rags' *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night*, *Legend of Boggy Creek* and *Phantom T-shirts* and posters, and album covers for bands such as Abigail Williams and Skeletonwitch—and the ghoulish caverman masks (handgrade by Sisson) that the band members wear for live performances.

"It's not like we have a GWAR-like stage show, but I definitely want to freak people out," explains Sisson, who has previously done makeup and special FX for a number of horror films, including *Boonie & Clyde vs. Dracula*, *Guardian of the Realm* and *Out For Blood*.

Troglodyte shouldn't be judged by visuals and concepts alone, though. It's simply a hard-hitting metal act emerging from the shadows to prove itself to the world. Or as Sisson puts it: "We deliver the musical equivalent of someone punching you in the nose."

Consider yourselves warned. 



NOW PLAYING > AMY, DEAD NATION, EAT THEM!, CRYSIS 2, THE DANSE MACABRE

AMY

AMY

PSN

VectorCell

For far too long it's been mighty Jean, picking star fight fans on the PlayStation Network (PSN) — Sony's online catalogue of competitively priced console games. But VectorCell president Paul Cusset hopes to bring this drought to an end with Amy, an action-survival game that will be available exclusively on PSN in June (see below for reviews of two other recent PSN genre titles). Developed with more than just splatter in mind, Cusset wants you to think and fight smart, and, above all, he wants to scare the crap out of you.

It all begins when a comet collides with Earth. Cusset explains: "The whole environment is infected by a virus that transforms everyone into zombies. You included. You only have two ways to avoid becoming one of them: find some med kits left by the soldiers or stay close to Amy.... [S]he can heal you just by being close to you."

Amy relies on an interdependent relationship between fully grown Lana and Amy, an eight-year-old autistic girl with some very special powers. To progress through the game, you will need to make use of both characters, as Lana is not a trained fighter, and despite being able to wield some small melee weapons (clubs, crowbars), she's still likely to die when confronting enemies.

"Most of the time, running away or hiding might be a safer option," warns Cusset. "Some enemies will detect your movements, others will hear every sound you make. We really worked hard on the A.I."

Strategy is absolutely vital here. For instance, you might use Amy's smaller size to crawl through tight zones, or use



her as bait ("although she may not like that," notes Cusset), as you navigate your way through the game's various combat and stealth sequences, escort missions and puzzles.

Plenty has been done to amp up the scares as well. Apart from the deployment of eerie ambient music and jump-scares, clever gameplay mechanics add to the game's overall intensity. When you hold Amy's hand, her heartbeat is simulated in your controller. The closer you are to danger, the faster it vibrates, so you know something really bad is coming even before seeing it.

"The major difference between Amy and the other survival horror games is the very deep way

you can co-operate with Amy," says Cusset. "Other games have featured a secondary character, but never like this. In Resident Evil, the secondary character is a co-fighter. In Dead Rising 2, the little girl is not used during the game-play phases," which makes for a completely different experience."

Promising a much-needed diversion from the often one-dimensional action/arcade games currently cluttering up the PSN online store, Amy may finally give horror gamers something truly meaty to grow through.

JESSA SOBCEK

DEAD NATION

DEAD NATION

PSN

Housemarque

This third-person shooter is all about moos and weapon upgrades. Mired in an apocalypse, your goal is to annihilate hordes of gruesome zombies, while navigating through different zones and checkpoints in a city you are desperate to escape. Ranged and melee fighting, as well as tactical explosives, can be used to clear out ghoul-infested streets, making strategy something of a factor. However, you can do just as well by sticking with your trusty rifle for the majority of the game. Clever use of driving, electronic music, cartoonish graphics and foggy, low-light environments help keep things incessantly tense, but ultimately this is an actioner with few genuine scares.

JESSA SOBCEK

EAT THEM!

EAT THEM!

PSN

Puffy Logic

Build a monster, destroy buildings, eat people: that's the essence of *Eat Them!*, a comic book-style arcade smasher that will surely help take the edge off a stressful day. Some levels require you to eat more people, other rounds make you destroy things faster. Succeeding in the game's challenges means you get to upgrade and pimp out your kooky megarobot with monster parts that would make Chetiv jealous — hammer arms, rocket launchers, lizard heads. The plot may be practically absent and levels may get repetitive fairly quickly, but at only ten bones, *Eat Them!* is a perfect cathartic outlet for all you hungry monsters lying in wait.

JESSA SOBCEK

HEADBONKS: FUN TO STRATEGIZE MARS ZIMMER KILLS
MISFIRE: DIFFICULT TO SEE SOME IN-GAME ITEMS, HEAT ON FRIGHT

HEADBONKS: BRINK COLOR PALETTE AND PSYCHILLIC GRAPHICS
MISFIRE: SLOOZY A.I. NPC, REPETITIVE GAMESPLAY



CRYSIS 2

PC, PS3, Xbox 360
Electronic Arts

The year is 2023 and New York City has been reduced to nothing more than a charred husk after an alien race invaded and spread a heinous virus that killed off a large portion of its populace. You're cast as a marine named Alcatraz in this first-person shooter, which sees you sent back into the Big Rotten Apple to find a scientist and get him to safety before the extraterrestrials make a quick meal out of you.

Encased in a special armoured suit, you can sneak around in stealth-mode, increase your weapon effectiveness in armour-mode or switch to strength-mode to pick off more aliens and the scores of hostile soldiers who travel around in their own deadly suits and constantly leap out at you from all directions.

As far as *Crisis 2*'s graphics go, you'll be hard-pressed to find anything lacking in the game's stunning panoramic vistas, which are comprised of block after block of rubble-strewn streets and obliterated skyscrapers teeming with scary squid-like aliens that try to grab you with their glistening tentacles. Additionally, the city is littered with the remains of those who were unlucky enough to have encountered the virus, which completely decimated their existing cellular structures, reducing them to puddles of goopy mess.

Apart from the sudden ambushes and carnage-strewn urban environment, both of which bolster *Crisis 2*'s unsettling atmos-



phere, the game also delivers a scary soundtrack composed by Hans Zimmer (*The Dark Knight*, *Hannibal*, *The Ring*)

that's practically guaranteed to make the hair on the back of your neck stand up.

So strap on that armour, load your weapon and get ready to go all Snake Plissken on those aliens... so you can escape New York once and for all!

ANDREW LEE



HEADLINE: AMAZING GRAPHICS, FULLY DESTRUCTIBLE ENVIRONMENT, CHILLING SOUNDTRACK.
MINUS: SOME ENEMY SIGHTING SITES ARE REPETITIVE, STORYLINE COULD BE STRONGER.



THE DANSE MACABRE

RPG Sourcebook
White Wolf

White Wolf has consistently brought a wealth of rich storytelling to the diverse and heady world of its various role-playing games, which, of course, have long inspired those of us who have a predilection for monster-filled narratives to take on the roles of vampires and other beastly creatures.

The Danse Macabre is the latest offering in White Wolf's flagship franchise *Vampire: The Requiem* and it includes an overview for both seasoned role-playing veterans and those looking to sharpen their fangs for the first time. As well as restating the classic covenants that control the destiny of each of the major vampiric houses (and thus also help shape players' destinies), the sourcebook introduces several

new groups, including the Children of the Thorns, a bunch of vampires that have uncovered the truth to the Bloody Mary legend, and the Brides of Dracula, a kick-ass motorcycle gang that terrorizes the streets at night (making the Hell's Angels look like a bunch of pussies), dealing blood, bodies and drugs.

There are also loads of new rules, including some innovative guidelines for social combat and an intricate detailing of several inventive global conspiracies, which will help take your game to a whole new international scale if you so choose.

Not quite a player's guide and not quite a chronicler's guide, *The Danse Macabre* really is just as its title suggests: a dance with the dead. But be forewarned: it's very easy to get caught up in the swirling dervish of its twisted storylines, the waltz of its beautifully illustrated images and the mosh-pit of its gory feeding frenzies.

ANDREW LEE



HEADLINE: LOGICALLY ORDERED PRESENTATION, INCREDIBLE ATTENTION TO DETAIL.
MINUS: MIGHT BE TOO HARD TO FOLLOW FOR SOME FIRST-TIME PLAYERS

RUE MORGUE

and



THE BAT
by JUSTIN ERICKSON



THE LAST MAN ON EARTH
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by JASON EDMISTON



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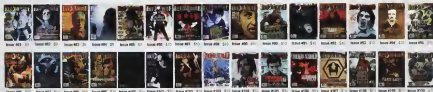
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CLASSIC CUT

ALL NIGHT LONG 2: ATROCITY

KATSUYA MATSUMURA JAPAN, 1995



Long before the term "torture porn" was coined in the West, the Japanese were creating the subgenre, culminating with 1995's *All Night Long 2: Atrocity*. The precursors to this title are represented by dozens of *Jōkyō* and *Shōgun*'s *Saigyō*-type period films, which were made in the 1970s. But the big leap forward came courtesy of Katsuya Matsumura, who transferred the humiliation, rape, torture and bloodshed from samurai times to a contemporary setting. The industrialized, high-tech world of modern Japan, with its disaffected, alienated youth, proved to be the ideal backdrop for ultra-violence, and the evening news provided more inspiration than one could wish for. Matsumura's *Schoolgirl in Cement* (1995), for example, was based on a real-life case of a girl who was abducted, raped and tortured for days, and then dumped in a barrel filled with cement. However, *All Night Long 2*, made in the same year, is not only his best film, but also the *non plus ultra* in cinematic sadism and the work that should be rightfully labelled as the first true "torture porn" outing.

It is the second part of a series united only by the themes of contemporary violence. While part one was more of a revenge flick, somewhat clumsily realized, the follow-up is where the director really found his theme, style and attitude. The plot deals with a group of thugs whose homosexual teenage leader wants to seduce an otaku boy, Shinichi. His seduction is as philosophical as it is erotic: this nameless Über-Man lives in an apartment adorned with large images of real-life atrocities and dissected bodies, and he attempts to initiate the boy into his own de Sade-esque macabre. He also keeps a girl for entertainment: raped by his gang, her fingernails torn off, reduced to a subhuman puppet to be beaten and humiliated passed on at will. A strange relationship between the boys begins.

Unlike the later mass-market American "torture porn" entries, with their larger-than-life villains, elaborate plots and expensive torture devices, Matsumura keeps everything simple, raw, down and dirty. He deals with what some have called "dove style violence" — a kind of abuse in which youths treat one another with a detached cruelty similar to certain avian flocks who peck at the weakest bird until it's dead. The pecking order of contemporary Japan is turned into a wallowing of horror in which there are no heroes; victims are easily turned into killers and nihilism pervades an unrelentingly bleak portrait of the human condition, which borders on mis-

anthropic. This is summarized in the lines from the third part of the series: "Man is born in incomplete dead body, and it takes a lifetime to become fully dead. Humans are living garbage." At the bloodsoaked climax of *All Night Long 2*, a boy stands above the naked bodies of a couple he's just butchered with a katana sword, laughing hysterically: "Meaningless... This is really meaningless."

The film is expertly shot on video, with fine framing and an obvious knack for composing an mobile image. In his Japanese Cinema Encyclopedia: *Horror, Fantasy and Science Fiction*, Tom Wisner claims that *All Night Long 2* was denied theatrical distribution in Japan; the ratings board allegedly labelling its overall tone "unacceptable." For a made-for-video title, such assertions are more likely attempts to trump up the film's controversial reputation.

It is easy to see why it could be controversial, as its "exploitation" elements are taken to extremes rarely seen or matched: cigarette burns on a penis; superglue poured into an ear flail cut off; a girl stripped nude and beaten senseless until she poos herself; torture aftermath on bodice, including large stains of both blood and feces; a fork stabbed into a hand; repeated knife wounds on a bully's crotch; a baseball bat and ketane to the head; and the highlight — a very explicit use of a pocket blowtorch on a pretty boy's face. But, rather than the actual deeds, it is the tone of unrelenting pessimism and amorality that makes the imagery so haunting.

All Night Long 2 set the torture bar so high that few films have come close since, including the following parts in the series (six in total, all by Matsumura). It is not the first nor most famous torture film (the *Guinea Pig* films came before), it is not the most explicit (there are countless snuff re-enactments such as *Psycho: The Snuff Tapes* and its American brethren, the *Morbid* series). But *All Night Long 2* has something that those lacked: intriguing plot and characters, a significant cinematic craft and a well-grounded bleak vision. Unlike the aforementioned pitiless FX-rolls, *All Night Long 2* has something to say, and it remains the pinnacle of nihilistic cinema, only recently challenged by distant successors such as *The Human Centipede* and *A Serbian Film*.

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